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A HISTORY OF
THE CHURCH IN THE YUKON

A dissertation
submitted to the General Faculty Council
Committee on Bachelor of Divinity Degrees
in candidacy for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Thomas John Sawyer, B.A.

University of Alberta

April, 1966

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
ST. STEPHEN'S THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

We, the undersigned, testify that we have read and recommend to the General Faculty Council for acceptance a thesis entitled, A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THE YUKON, submitted by Thomas John Sawyer, B.A., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity.

PREFACE

Most people undertake research in a given topic because they have a particular interest in it or because they have a desire to know something for themselves. I undertook this history of the Church in the Yukon because it was about the only topic on which I could write a dissertation for my B.D. degree while living in the North, almost a thousand miles from a Theological library. As I began the work I found the topic became more and more fascinating. There were a few books written on Anglican work and a few reminiscences recorded by Presbyterian George Pringle. The rest of my information had to be gathered from archive, from secular books that mentioned the Church, from minutes and church records, and from men and women who had personal knowledge of the Church's work in the Yukon.

The biggest problem I encountered was keeping the work of the various churches in proper perspective. I was always fighting a tendency to include numerous details when they were available while passing off extended periods of a church's work with a brief comment when information was scarce. I am very conscious of the numerous areas that require more research. I think particularly of the Anglican Church during the 1930's and early 1940's. Although the Roman Catholic Church is well covered as far as factual information is concerned, I was unable to gather interesting stories about the various personalities that are involved in recent times.

There are many other areas where I have recently obtained leads to information that would require a good many months to track down. Academic time limits and the pressures of my pastoral work force me to submit this paper at this time, although I now intend to follow my research through to eventually compile a more complete history of the Yukon Church.

The format is rather simple. I began with an historical sketch of the Yukon because most people know very little about this background which is necessary for an understanding of the Church's work. I then dealt with the two main communions in the Yukon, the Anglican and Catholic Churches. In the fourth chapter I have dealt with the churches more or less in the order of their appearance in the Yukon. Finally there is an attempt to sum up the work of the whole Church.

This paper would not have been possible without the personal assistance of many individuals who helped by answering my letters, by taking time to discuss their Yukon experiences with me, by suggesting leads to further information, by loaning needed books, and by helping in other ways. These people are: Rev. D.C. Amos, United Church minister at Willowdale, Ont.; Fr. M. Bobillier, O.M.I., Dawson City, Y.T.; Fr. L. Boyd, O.M.I.; Fort Nelson, B.C.; Mr. Hilton O. Brown, Ft. St. John, B.C.; Lt. Col J. Curdy, Western Command Chaplain (P), Canadian Army; Brig. H. Charlebois, Chaplain General of

the Armed Forces (R.C.); Mrs. M. Chaddock, Watson Lake, Y.T.; Mrs. E. Colyer, Regional Librarian, Whitehorse; Most Rev. J.L. Coudert, O.M.I. (Obit. 1965) former Vicar Apostolic of Whitehorse (Bishop); Dr. D.J.C. Elson, St. Stephen's College, Edmonton; Mr. A.E. Fry, Indian Superintendent, Whitehorse; Rev. E.G.B. Foote, Chaplain General of the Armed Forces (P); Rev. Thomas Gemmell, Presbyterian minister, Whitehorse; R.E. Gileich, Yukon Baptist Missionary Society, Whitehorse;; Rev. M.K. Gulbis, pastor of the Lutheran Church, Whitehorse; Rev. D. Jespersen, pastor of Alliance Church, Fort Nelson, B.C.; Rev. Dr. C.F. Johnston, St. Stephen's College, Edmonton; Mr. David Lancaster, Atlin, B.C.; Rt. Rev. Henry Marsh (Bishop) and Mrs. Marsh, Whitehorse, Y.T.; Rev. Harold P. Marston, United Church minister, Whitehorse; Rev. Harrold Morris, Presbyterian Supt. of Home Missions for Peace River Presbytery, Grande Prairie, Alta.; Col. J. R. Millar, Director of Chaplain Services (Army) (P); Very Rev. Alexix Monnet, O.M.I., Whitehorse; Mr. J.A. Morrison, Catechist at the Presbyterian Church, Whitehorse; Rev. W.P. Morton, Baptist minister, Whitehorse; Most Rev. J.P. Mulvihill, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic of Whitehorse (Bishop); Prof. Catherine McLellan, University of Wisconsin Anthropology Dept.; Rev. F.A. Peake, Anglican minister, London, Ont.; Rev. H.E. Peake, Anglican minister, Watson Lake, Y.T.; Rev. Dr. A.G. Reynolds, Archivist of United Church, Toronto; W/C W. Rodgers, Chaplain (P), Canadian Forces Headquarters; Mrs. Florence Scoffield,

Archivist, St. Stephen's College; Rev. W. Sproule, Baptist minister at Watson Lake; Dr. E.J. Thompson, St. Stephen's College, Edmonton; Rev. Cyril E.H. Williams, Archivist, Anglican Theological College, Vancouver, B.C.

I would also like to thank the congregation of Hillcrest United Church, Fort Nelson, for letting me spend so much of their time gathering information for this paper, and my wife for the help she has given throughout.

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BEFORE EXPLORATION

In the early decades of the nineteenth century the Yukon was still unknown territory to the White man. The Indians in the area were scattered far and wide over the land and had heard nothing of the God that the traders were going to bring with them. There were two main groups of Indians: the Chilkoots (also known as Chilkats, Tlingits or Tinglits) of the Pacific coast; and the Dene of the interior. The latter group was divided into the Loucheux or Tukudh of the Peel and Porcupine Rivers, and the Kutchin or Stick (Wood) Indians who occupied the Upper Yukon and who were subjugated by the Chilkoots. The Chilkoots had their slaves carry trade goods obtained from the Russians into the interior on annual trade journeys. These crafty people often had a Chilkoot wife at the coast and a Stick wife in the interior so they might have both profit and safety assured on their journeys.¹

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

White man was to make his entry from across the mountains in the Northeast and in the Southeast in search of furs and easy passage to the West coast. Alexander Mackenzie had reached the Arctic Ocean via the river that bears his name on July 12th, 1789. After that there was a long, twenty-five year dispute between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company over the trading rights in the Mackenzie River area. A merger between the two companies settled the dispute in 1821 and George

Simpson was appointed Governor of the northern department of Rupert's Land. Sir John Franklin, leaving the mouth of the Mackenzie River, travelled along the Arctic coast of what is now the Yukon Territory. This first contact with the present Yukon had no lasting effects on the territory.

Simpson assigned Robert Campbell to find a westward flowing river so Campbell travelled up the Liard and reached the Pelly River in 1839 after making portages and crossing lakes. Two years later he established Fort Pelly Banks, and the next year, 1843, went downstream to reach the Lewes River (actually the Yukon), and there made contact with the Stick Indians. Returning in 1848 Campbell established Fort Selkirk where the Pelly flows into the Lewes. The Stick Indians had been prevented by the Chilkoots from trading with the Russians at the coast so Fort Selkirk was the first competition for the Chilkoot monopoly.

While Campbell reached the Yukon River via the Liard and Pelly Rivers, J. Bell, of the Hudson's Bay Company, crossed the extreme Northern Rockies and travelled three days journey down the Porcupine River. In 1846 he returned and travelled the Porcupine to its mouth on the Yukon River.² The next year A.H. Murry established a trading post there and named it Fort Yukon. La Pierre's House was also established that year on the Porcupine River near the present village of Old Crow.

Campbell eventually travelled down the Lewes to reach Fort Yukon and to discover that the Lewes River and the Yukon River were one.

Fort Selkirk did not last very long as the Chilkoots did not like having their monopoly and trade disturbed. They entered the interior and destroyed the Fort in 1852, thus driving the powerful Hudson's Bay Company from the Upper Yukon.

Fort Yukon stayed intact until 1868 when it was washed away by the erosion of the Yukon River. A new post was built a mile upstream in 1869. Soon after this Captain Raymond of the United States Military Engineers was sent to determine the 141st meridian (the boundary between the District of Alaska, just purchased from Russia, and the British Territory). Since the Fort was four degrees inside American territory, Raymond confiscated all the Hudson's Bay buildings. Having no alternative, John Wilson, the manager, re-located at the foot of Rampart Canyon, calling the new post Fort Rampart. In 1872 the Hudson's Bay Company realized this post was also in American territory so, after burning the buildings, abandoned it. Later, when the new Rampart House further upstream (about fifty miles west of modern Old Crow) was abandoned in 1894, the Hudson's Bay Company ended its Yukon endeavours. The Company was not to re-enter the territory again until 1940 when posts were established at Selkirk and at the mouth of the Stewart River.

THE RUSSIANS

Vitus Bering, a Danish sailor in the Russian navy in 1725, became the first explorer to discover that Asia and America were separated by sea. Two years later a group of Cossacks under Michael Godoff, after being driven by a storm, reached an island from which they saw mainland Alaska on August 21st, 1732. In 1741 Bering, now a commander, sailed with two ships that became separated in a storm. The second ship, under Chirikoff, was driven to land and shelter at, it is believed, modern Sitka harbor. After Bering searched for three days, he returned along the shore, sighting and naming the high peak of Mount St. Elias. On December 8th of that year Bering died and was buried on the Aleutian island that bears his name.

Upon Chirikoff's return, Russian claims in America were made and posts established under the Russian flag as far south as San Francisco Bay. Rivalry and lawlessness led Emperor Paul to establish a corporation, later known as the Russian-American Company, in 1799. All Russian American possessions were turned over to the corporation under the Governor, Alexander Baranoff, at the chief trading post of Fort Archangel (now Sitka) established on May 21st, 1799. Some interesting stories are told about Baranoff

the rum-swilling Lord of Alaska who ruled the peninsula from the island bastion of Sitka... garnering a fortune in furs against an incongruous background of fine books, costly paintings, and brilliantly plummaged officers and

women...³

Years later the Russian hold in Alaska was seriously weakened because of superior quality British merchandise and fairer British dealing with the Indians. A deal much criticized as "Seward's Folly" was completed in 1866 and Alaska was purchased by the United States in 1867 for seven million, two hundred thousand dollars. Thus Alaska became American territory in the year of Canada's Confederation.

THE GOLD SEEKERS

The Hudson's Bay Company and the Russian American Company were only interested in furs. Robert Campbell had found traces of gold at Fort Selkirk. In 1863 Archdeacon McDonald⁴ found gold on Birch Creek not far below Fort Yukon so concentrated "that he could have gathered it with a spoon". But these men had other interests. Gold was little more than an interesting curiosity to them.

There were others, however, who did seek gold. Theories were produced that there was gold in the mountains from Mexico to the Arctic. The gold rushers moved north from California on through the Fraser and Caribou and up to Cassiar. "Shouldn't there be more gold in the Yukon?" some adventurous prospectors asked. When hardrock gold was discovered at Juneau in 1880, the lure of the Yukon reached the lonely prospectors.

The Yukon River is rather unique in that it rises fifteen miles from the Pacific only to travel a course

of two thousand miles, taking it within the Arctic circle and through the heart of Alaska, before it finally pours into the Bering Sea. As the early traders had approached from different directions, so would the gold seekers. We can look at three typical men.

Arthur Harper, an Irishman who knew the stampedes on the Fraser and in the Caribou in the fifties and sixties, followed the Peace and Mackenzie River systems to enter from the north in 1873 as did the Hudson's Bay traders twenty seven years before. Harper was to spend a quarter century seeking, but never finding, the gold that was under him all the time.

George Holt entered in 1878 by the short, but tough route -- over the Chilkoot Pass. To do this he had to scale a thirty-five degree glacial slope as well as steal past the hostile Chilkoot sentinels who guarded the pass. When Holt emerged with two small nuggets given him by Indians from Alaska, the interest at Sitka, full of the backwash from the Caribou, was aroused. Twenty prospectors, with the support of a few rounds from a U.S. gunboat's gatling gun, convinced the Chilkoot chief, Hole-in-the-face, that the pass should be opened. From 1880 onward, men trickled over the pass into the Yukon. The Indians did not suffer as they began charging fees for packing the prospectors' gear over the pass. During the Klondike rush these fees reached a dollar a pound.

Ed Schieffelin travelled the third entry route in

1883. Schieffelin was already a millionaire for he had discovered a mountain of silver in Arizona and had founded the town of Tombstone. He built a tiny steamboat and left St. Michael, near the mouth of the Yukon, to penetrate the interior. There were occasional pinpoints of civilization at the old Russian missions of Andreifski, Holy Cross and Nulato. But by the time Schieffelin reached the lower Ramparts where he found traces of gold, the frost was in the air. The cold proved too much for a sun-roasted Arizona prospector, so he turned back concluding that mining could not pay in the frozen northern wilderness.

The main activity on the Yukon remained the occasional free-trader on a commission from the Alaska-Commercial Company, the successor to the Russian-American Fur Company. Arthur Harper became frustrated with prospecting so became a trader along with two others who arrived the same year he did. They were little Al Mayo and big Leroy Napoleon (Jack) McQuesten. These three, along with Joseph Ladue who came a decade later, were able to set up posts that would eventually be the supply lines to the Klondike stampeders.

The first of these posts was Fort Reliance located in British territory on the Yukon just six miles below the mouth of the stream that later became world famous as the Klondike River. Fortymile River and Twelvemile River were so named because they were that distance downstream on the Yukon from Fort Reliance.

Sixtymile River was above the post. The supplies were brought in by the New Racket, the little steamer purchased from Schieffelin.

By 1886 two hundred miners had entered over the Chilkoot Pass. In that year they panned one hundred thousand dollars worth of fine placer gold from the Stewart River where the trading partners built a post to outfit them. The following winter a richer discovery was made at Fortymile. The resulting town of Fortymile sprang up. From that time on events began to happen more quickly. A second supply boat, the Alaska Commercial's Arctic, was put into service. Fortymile, although on Canadian territory, was initially run and governed by the American style miners' meetings. These town meetings followed only the golden rule in determining justice. The men themselves were mostly individuals whom Father William Judge⁵ described as

men running away from civilization as it advanced westward -- until now they have no farther to go and so have to stop.⁶

One of the few breaks in the monotony of sinking shafts⁷ was a ritual called a "squaw dance". A number of Indian women would come to a shack, bringing their children, to dance with the miners to the "music" of a single fiddle and the shuffle of feet. Because the Indians and miners could not speak a common language, there was no conversation. As the Indian women tired, they would pick up their children and leave for home. There was very little lawlessness but simultaneous complaints by

Bishop Bompas⁸ over a shooting affair, and a trader, J.J. Healy, over some "justice" handed out to him, brought Inspector Charles Constantine of the North West Mounted Police in 1894. With Constantine's arrival, the camp came under full Canadian law and was assured the presence of law and order before the Klondike discovery.

THE KLONDIKE

For ten years after the Fortymile discovery the miners made a series of small discoveries with the tide of humanity shifting from one place to another, but with Fortymile remaining the center of activity. Then came ~~that~~ fateful encounter between Robert Henderson and a "squawman", George Washington (Siwash George) Carmacks and his two companions, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie. Henderson told Carmacks that the prospects looked good on "Rabbit Creek" flowing into the "Thron-diuck". If there was anything worth-while, Carmacks, according to the unwritten code of the miners, would let Henderson know. Carmack's outfit tried Rabbit Creek and panned out four dollars a pan in a country where ten cents meant good prospects. Staking his claim on August 17th, 1896, Carmacks went to record it and to let everyone -- except Henderson -- know of his find. Trader Ladue immediately staked a townsite at the mouth of the "Thron-diuck" (but mispronounced "Klondike" by the miners) on the Yukon River. He named this new townsite, Dawson City, after George Dawson, a government geologist. Rabbit Creek, which flowed into the "Klondike", was given

the new, and more romantic, name of Bonanza. One of its tributaries proved to be the richest of all creeks with some five hundred foot claims yielding one and a half million dollars in placer gold. This tributary was aptly named "Eldorado".

That winter the news reached Circle City, Alaska, and the whole population moved approximately three hundred miles upstream to Dawson City. The next summer the steamer, Excelsior, reached San Francisco on July 15th, and the Portland docked at Seattle on the 17th. The latter ship carried over two tons of gold dust on her. The word was out and the Klondike stampede was on. Practically everything that would float, and some things that just about did not float, were rounded up to move people north. Despite warnings from a few responsible people that nobody could get into the Yukon until the following spring, thousands set sail for Dyea, Skagway, and St. Michael, with others preparing to leave Ashcroft and Edmonton. The stage was set for the rush of '98.

The story of the Klondike rush could fill a book -- indeed, it has filled many books already. Very few men from the "outside" were to reach Dawson in 1897. They piled up in the coastal towns where they landed from the south. The White Pass at Skagway was discovered and developed. The number of animals perishing on this route resulted in its being named "the dead horse trail". A toll road was built from Haines to the Yukon watershed. Dawson City itself underwent a bad winter with short food

supplies. Gold was plentiful but could buy very little. Scurvy was more common than colds. With the coming of the spring break-up, the people poured in. The presence of the Mounties in the Canadian territories prevented the wide open lawlessness so often associated with stampedes. It was a different story on the American side. The saga of "Soapy" Smith, the dictator of Skagway, is one that foreshadows organized crime in modern times.

An accurate estimate of Dawson's population was difficult because of the confusion of thousands of people in a tent town with no addresses and continual movement. Estimates for the year from July, 1898 to July, 1899 run between thirty and forty thousand. There were people from every walk of life, from every country and from every profession. Lack of writing paper often meant no duplicate records were kept of claims. This was to lead to confusion and bribery to have claims altered. Dance halls were wide open, liquor flowed freely, and the Mounties overlooked the prostitutes as long as they stayed in their section and did not frequent the streets before four o'clock in the afternoon. There was one exception to the wide openness of Dawson City and that was Sunday when everything closed down. There is even record of two dog "mushers" being arrested for racing their teams on Sunday. Despite this general "openness" there was very little violence, few robberies, and no murders in that booming year. The Mounties did their job well and were respected by all. This is more

than could be said about the civil service, especially in the Gold Commissioner's Office.

Two events were to end the Klondike rush. The first was the outbreak of the Spanish-American War on April 24th, 1898. Eighty percent of the Klondike stampedeers were Americans. Many of these, upon realizing that they would not find their fortunes in the gold-fields, returned to fight for their country. Many British subjects were to leave for a similar reason with the start of the Boer War. The second event that ended the Klondike rush was another discovery of gold further north and west near the place where the Yukon spends itself into the Pacific. By mid-summer, 1899, the rush to Nome, Alaska, was on.

AFTER THE RUSH

The Klondike forever changed the Yukon. One of the biggest changes occurred with the building of the narrow gage White Pass Railway that runs from Skagway to the town of Whitehorse which sprang up at the foot of the Whitehorse Rapids⁹ just below Miles Canyon on the Yukon River. Construction began at Skagway in July, 1898, reached the summit on February 20th, 1899, and Bennett Lake on July 6th of that same year. The last spike between Bennett and Whitehorse was driven on July 29th, 1900. This railway provided easy, safe transportation from the Pacific to a point below all serious navigational hazards on the Yukon River. This railway was to play a major part in building the Alaska Highway

during the Second World War. The White Pass Company built a complete passenger and freight service to Dawson and other Yukon points. This integrated company used railway, steamers (both river and ocean) dog-teams, stage coaches, then -- in recent years -- buses and trucks. A stage winter road was built to shorten the distance from Whitehorse to Dawson. The Yukon was no longer isolated from civilization.

The gold operations were gradually taken over by large dredging companies that are still operating (1966). Other discoveries of other minerals were made. A silver lode was found and developed at Galena Creek about 1912. More silver was found at Keno Hill in 1919. This mining area around Keno, Elsa and Mayo is still producing silver, lead, zinc and cadmium. Each of these discoveries kept a small activity in the Yukon and helped develop transportation facilities, but the over-all Yukon population continued to drop until the Second World War.

Initially the Mounties were the only government agents. Then Commissioner Walsh, along with Post Office, Customs and Gold Commission officials, was appointed in 1897 and reached the Yukon in 1898. William Ogilvie, a well respected government surveyor, was soon appointed Commissioner to straighten out the mess in the claims recording office. He eventually got the claims properly surveyed and recorded. The Commissioner was appointed presiding officer over two other appointed men who formed

formed the Yukon Council. Local pressure led to the addition of two elected men to the Council. In 1902 the Yukon was granted an elected Member of Parliament in Ottawa with all five of the Yukon Council members being elected. At the present time the Commissioner acts, under the instructions of the Minister of Northern Affairs, in a capacity similar to that of a Provincial Cabinet while the seven man elected council act under the Commissioner in a capacity similar to a Provincial Legislature.

The late Grant McConachie initiated an air service to the "outside" when he flew a tri-motored transport to Whitehorse from Edmonton via Grande Prairie and Ft. St. John in 1937. In the early war years (around 1941) a series of airports *was* built in Northern British Columbia, the Yukon, and in Alaska, to ferry airplanes from the United States to Russia. Many of these planes were turned over to Russian pilots at Watson Lake, Y.T. These airports fully opened the airways to the Yukon.

The Japanese threat to Alaska during the Second World War led to the rapid construction of the Alaska Highway. This 1523 mile road was begun in March 1942 and was completed in November that same year. In less time than many stampeters took to get to the Yukon in 1898, a road was built right through from one side to the other. The Highway begins at Dawson Creek, B.C., moves north to Fort Nelson, B.C., cuts westward and slightly north to Watson Lake, Y.T., Whitehorse, Y.T.,

the Alaska Border, and on to Fairbanks, Alaska. Soon other roads were built or upgraded. Men and women could now drive comfortably in their cars to the heart of the Klondike. It is no longer an isolated country for it has daily bus and air service from Edmonton and Vancouver. There is also a regular steamship service through Skagway. This easy transportation brought a new and more permanent boom to the Yukon. Thousands of tourists pass through each year on their way to and from Alaska.

An oil pipeline, known as the Canol line, was also built during the war. It brought crude oil from Norman Wells on the Mackenzie, to a refinery at Whitehorse. This line was abandoned soon after the war and had little permanent effect on the Yukon.

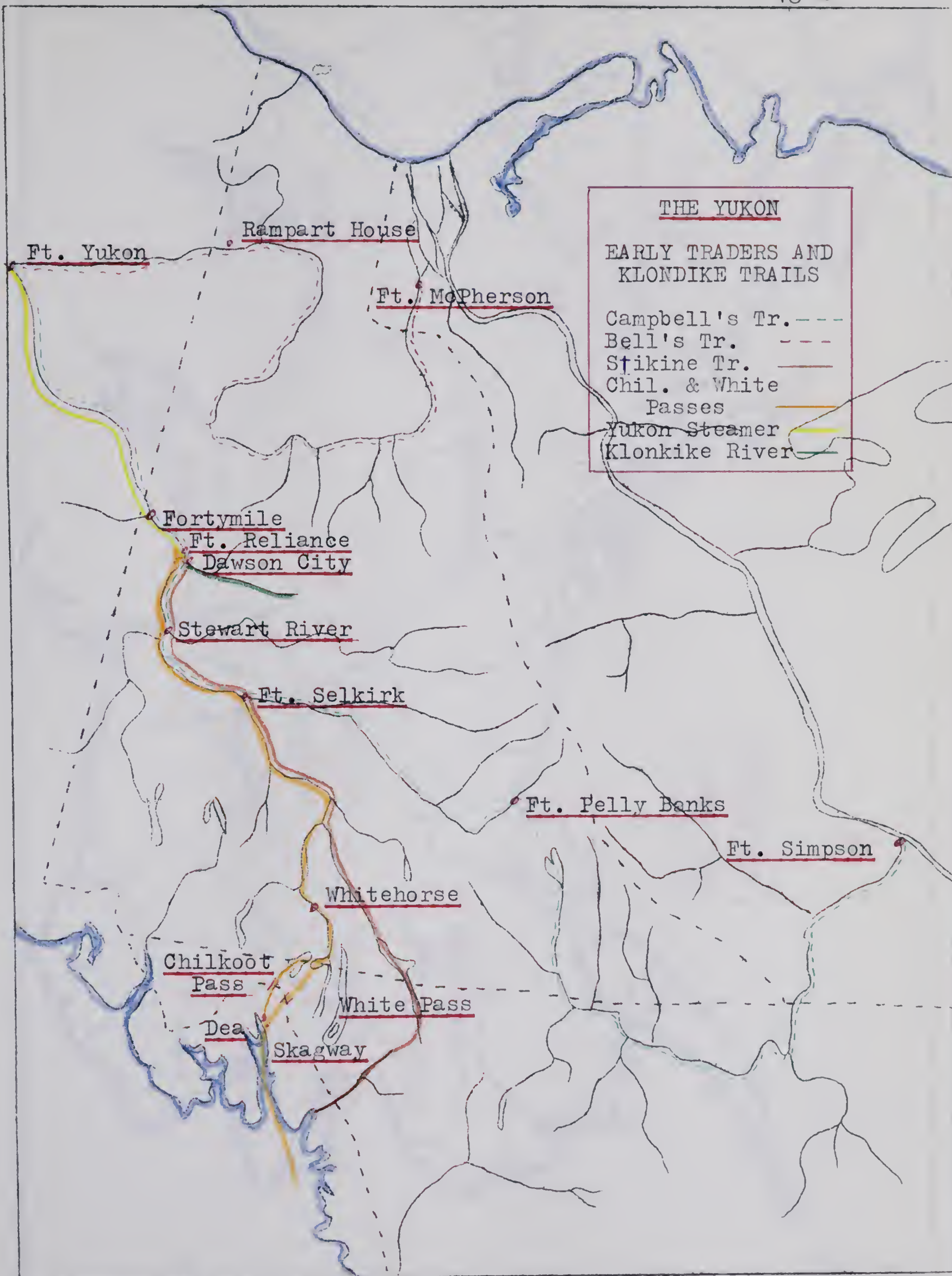
Since the war, mining developments at Cassiar, B.C., and Cantung, N.W.T., have helped develop Watson Lake, Y.T., as the roads to both these mines join the Alaska Highway at, or near this town. A new asbestos mine will soon open near Dawson City, but it is too early to assess its influence on the economy of the Yukon.

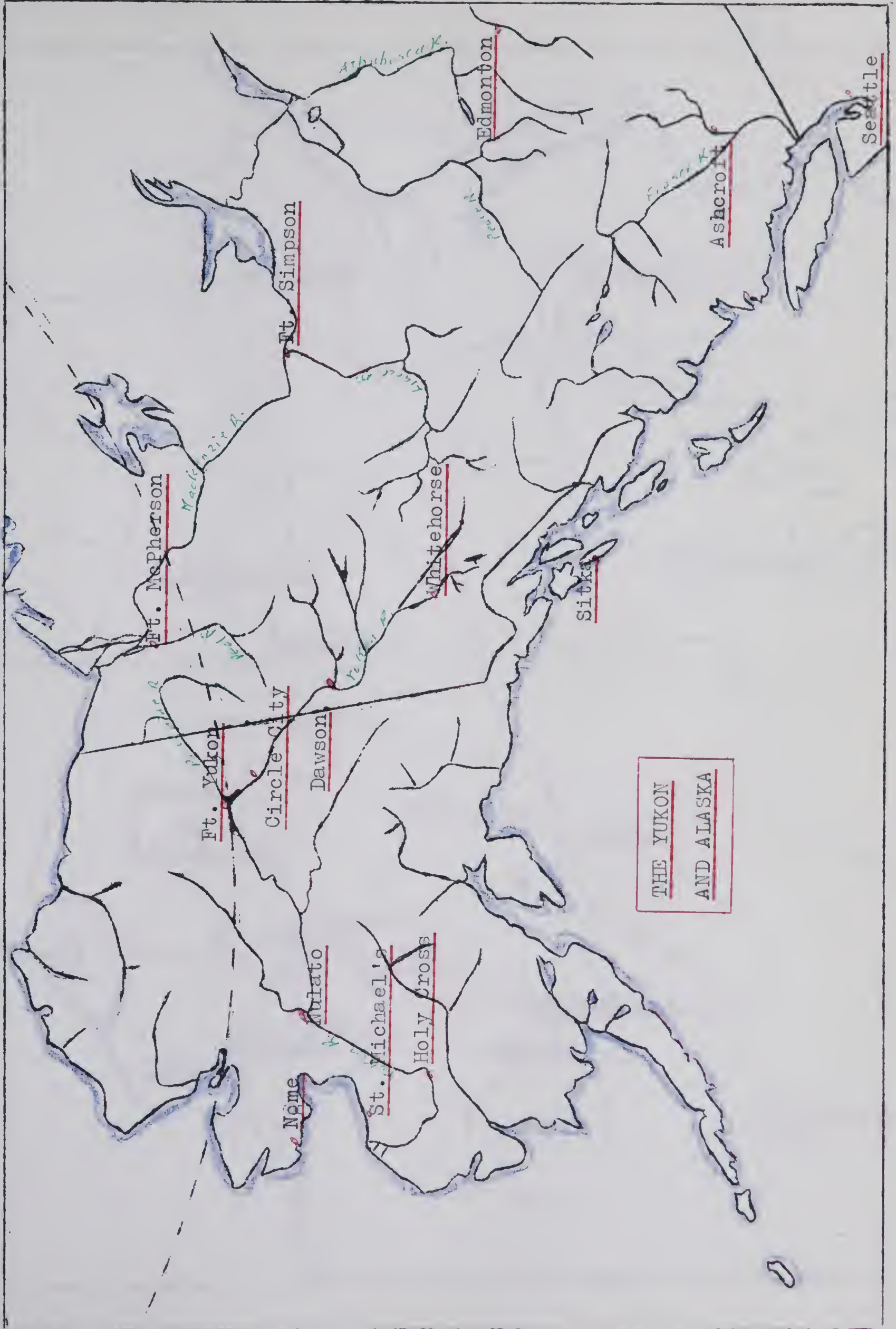
This chapter has been a brief history of the land of furs and nuggets, steep mountain passes and long river voyages. But the fur traders and the prospectors were not the only people who entered the Yukon valley. Shortly after the first traders and before the first prospectors, hearty men of the cloth were to bring the Good News of their Lord, the Christian Gospel, into this forbidding land. Let us now turn to the story of the

Church in the Yukon.

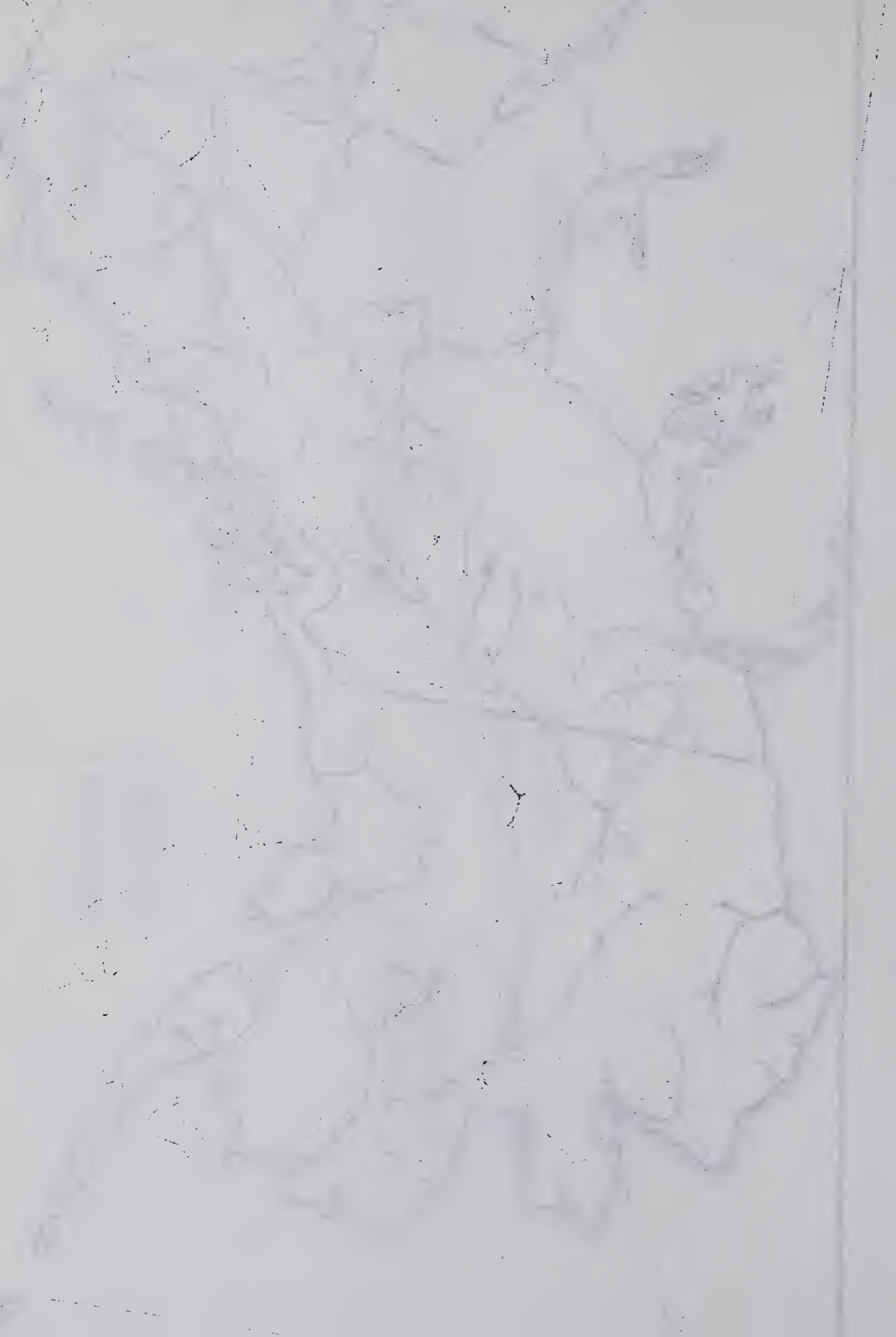
FOOTNOTES on Chapter One

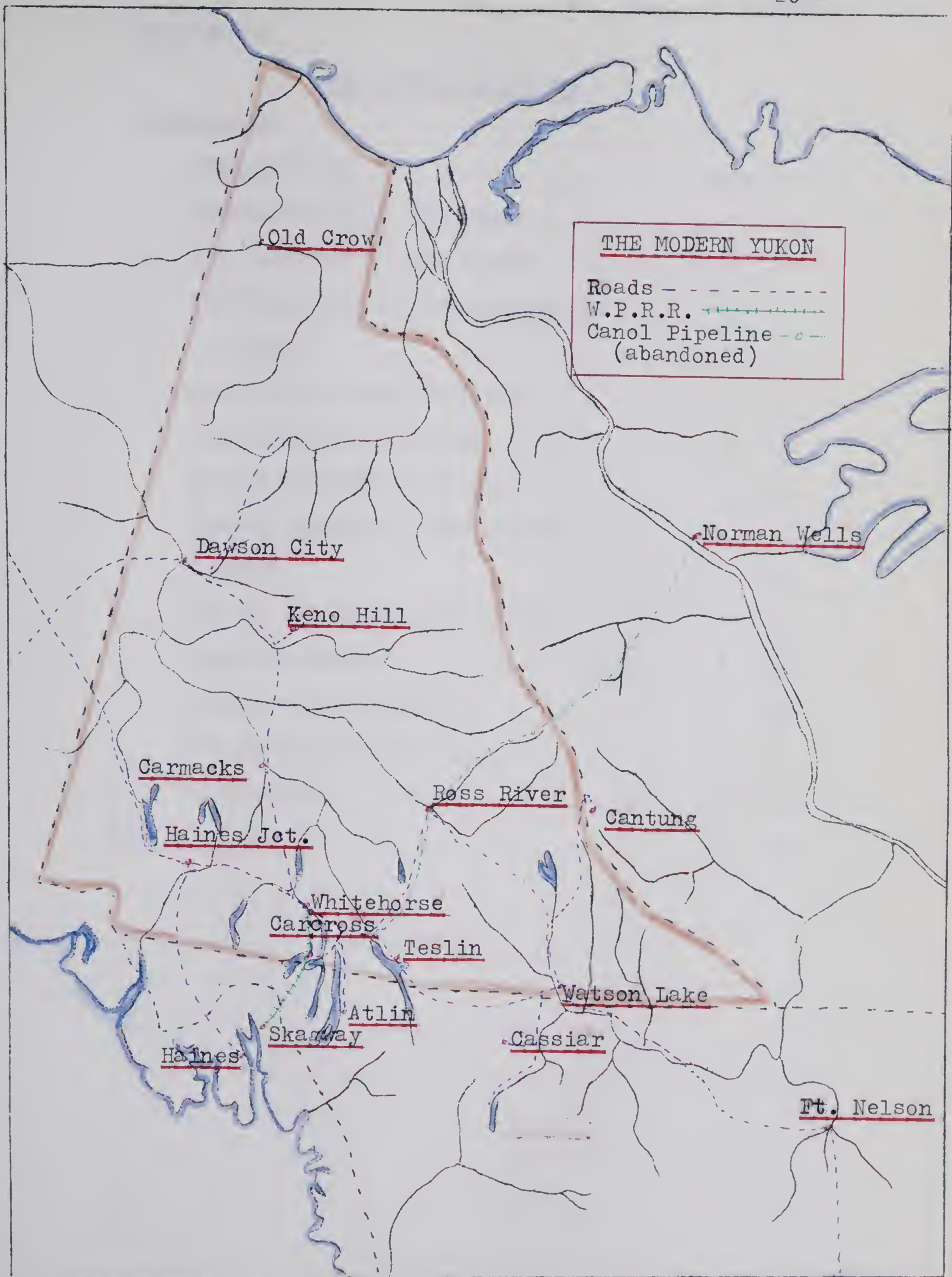
- 1 V. infra, Chapter Five, Native Religions
- 2 Yukon is an Indian name meaning "greatest"
- 3 Pierre Berton, Klonḏike, P. 5
- 4 V. infra, pp. 24-6
- 5 V. Infra, pp. 66ff
- 6 Berton, Op. Cit. p. 18
- 7 By the tedious method of burning and thawing permafrost, digging out the thawed part, only to burn and thaw to dig some more.
- 8 V. infra, pp. 26ff
- 9 So named for the white spray looking like a rearing stallion.

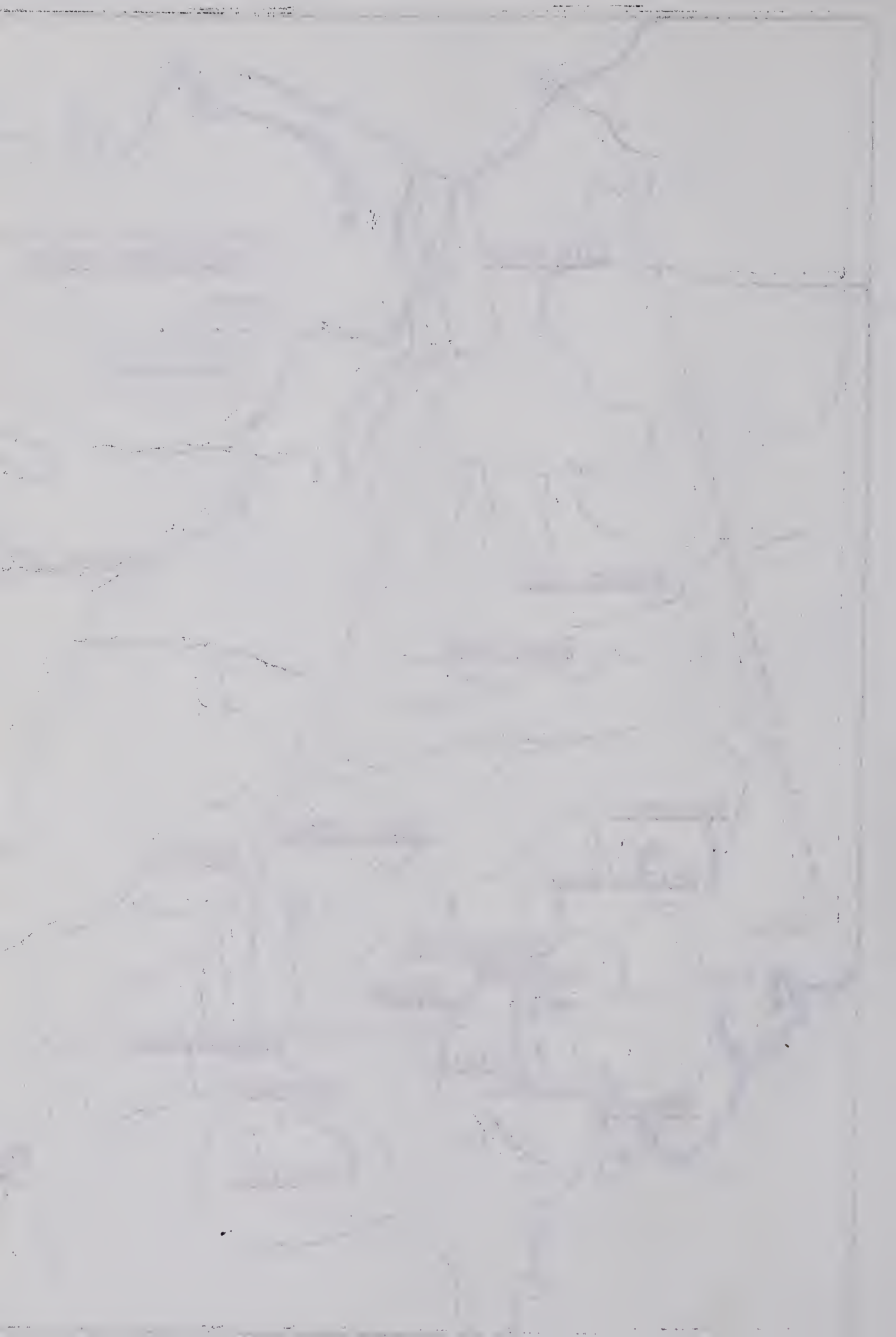




THE YUKON
AND ALASKA







CHAPTER TWO

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

SUBHEADINGS

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INTRODUCTION

Considerable published information is available for certain periods of the Anglican Church's history in the Yukon, while other periods are very difficult to research. The life of Bishop Bompas, who caught the imagination of the Anglicans, was well documented by H.A. Cody in An Apostle of the North. The Rev. F.A. Peake of London, Ontario is working on a history of Bishop I.O. Stringer's time. Unfortunately Mr. Peake's work was not available to the author of this paper at the time of writing. The period of greatest silence is the episcopacy of Bishop Geddes. There are new sources of information for the period beginning with Archbishop Adams. These sources are Synod records (there was no Synod meeting from 1936 to 1948) and Northern Lights, the Diocesan publication which had not been printed for many years during and prior to the War. This chapter follows the development of the Anglican Church in chronological order with a brief historical sketch of each parish at the end.

ESTABLISHING IN THE NORTH

T.C.B. Boon, in his book, The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies, mentions there is some evidence that the first Anglican missionaries venturing into the Mackenzie basin were two of the first pupils (James and John Hope) of the Church Missionary Society school established in the Red River Settlement. Unfortunately he does not give us this evidence.¹

Archdeacon Hunter, of the Red River settlement, received a message from chief Tripe de Roche (Rockweed) in the Athabasca country in 1848 asking that a teacher be sent to his people. Other matters kept Hunter from responding until he obtained permission to leave for his northern mission in the summer of 1858. In a letter from Portage la Roche to the Church Missionary Society, dated July 31st, 1858, Hunter points out something of the travel time needed to reach the North in the early days.

I am writing to you now from the long portage, about 1500 miles on my way to the Mackenzie River. We arrived here on the 26th instant, making the journey about fifty days from Red River to this place. During the latter part of our journey we had very wet weather...thus we sat sixteen and eighteen hours daily in an open boat, and sometimes in very heavy rain. The number of portages we have crossed is about forty-eight; in English River we made three and four daily...

On leaving here we shall go down the current rapidly; five days will take us to the Athabasca Lake, another five days to Great Slave Lake, and about five more to Fort Simpson, on the banks of the mighty Mackenzie River. I shall, however, next Spring, God willing, when the ice breaks up on the Mackenzie River, proceed down about 500 miles, visiting Fort Norman and Fort Good Hope, and return in time to Fort Simpson to proceed out to Portage la Roche with the Mackenzie River brigades.²

In the same letter, Hunter suggests that two married young men of good health and active habits and with an aptitude for acquiring languages be sent to serve that area. He reached Fort Simpson on August 16th, 1858. From there he visited Forts Liard, Norman and Good Hope where he saw a number of Takudh (Loucheux) Indians from beyond the mountains and longed to take

the Gospel to them. He was back in the Red River settlement by the fall of 1859.

The Rev. William Kirkby had come from England in 1852 to take charge of a school. He was ordained on December 24th, 1854, and priested on January 1st, 1856, by Bishop Anderson in St. John's Pro-Cathedral in the Red River settlement. On June 10th, 1859, Kirkby and his wife proceeded to Fort Simpson to establish the first permanent mission station and to build St. David's Church.³

Kirkby began missionary work in what is now the Yukon when he descended the Mackenzie in the summer of 1861, reached Fort McPherson, ascended the Peel and crossed to La Pierre's House.^{3a} The officer in charge met Kirkby with tear-filled eyes saying, "I never thought to see the day when a minister of the Gospel would be at La Pierre's House."⁴ Here Kirkby was warmly received by the Loucheux Indians who had a very poor reputation. We are told that the medicine man renounced his "curious arts" in the presence of all. Murder, infanticide, and polygamy were publically confessed and solemnly abandoned. From La Pierre's House, Kirkby travelled to Fort Yukon. He made the same trip the next summer. Upon his return to Fort Simpson in the fall of 1862, Kirkby found the Rev. Robert McDonald waiting there for him. Archdeacon Hunter's appeal for two men was answered.

Robert McDonald, born at Point Douglas (Winnipeg)

in 1829, was ordained deacon on December 19th, 1852, and was priested June 5th, 1853. He had spent ten years among the Ojibway Indians at White Dog, then a brief period at St. James in Winnipeg. With the Red River settlement paying his expenses, McDonald reached Fort Yukon in October, 1862. There he began his work with the Loucheux Indians and baptized his first converts. After two years reports of his failing health reached Bishop Anderson who was in England where the Bishop preached on May 1st, 1865 asking,

Shall no one come forward to take up the standard of the Lord as it falls from his (McDonald's) hands, and to occupy the ground?⁵

William Carpenter Bompas, a Lincolnshire curate, responded by offering himself for the work after the service. McDonald, however, recovered and was able to stay at Fort Yukon until 1871 when American pressure forced him to retreat to Canadian territory.⁶ Moving to Fort McPherson in the Mackenzie basin, McDonald continued to work with both Eskimos and Loucheux Indians from the Yukon who came there to trade. Remaining there until 1904, McDonald married a convert, Julia Smith in 1877. She assisted him with a translation of the Bible and Prayer Book, and in the preparation of a hymn book in Loucheux. McDonald used Roman letters because he found the language too difficult for syllabics. His final work was a Loucheux grammar published in 1911 after his retirement. He died on August 29th, 1913.

One of the greatest tributes to the work of

McDonald was made in 1916 by an American Episcopal Archdeacon who found a remote Alaskan tribe using a McDonald translation and still praying daily for Queen Victoria. Only after considerable persuasion did the American give up trying to convince the Indians to pray for the President of the United States instead of for the long dead Queen.

THE "APOSTLE OF THE NORTH"

William Bompas, the man who responded to Bishop Anderson's plea, was born in London on January 20th, 1834, the fourth son of a Sergeant-at-Law. In 1858 he was preparing to follow his own career in Law when a serious illness gave him time to consider the ministry. On his ordination as a deacon on December 18th, 1859, he gained experience in parishes with scattered population and in other parishes located in over-crowded industrial areas. He was turned down by the Church Missionary Society for work in the East because, being over thirty at the time, the committee thought him too old to cope with the language. He was, however, accepted for Canada's Northwest and, after his priesting on June 25th, 1865, he set out for Fort Yukon.

Bompas' journey to Canada demonstrated the man's determination. Before he left England he decided to reach Fort Simpson by Christmas. Leaving on June 30th by steamer, he reached New York, travelled by rail through La Crosse, by steamer to St. Paul and reached the Red River settlement early in August. From there

travel became more difficult. Catching rides on boats when he could, and canoeing himself with two half breeds on another occasion, Bompas made Fort Chipewayan. Upon leaving there with three Indian boys in a big canoe, water conditions became so difficult that Fort Resolution, on the south side of Great Slave Lake, had to be reached through the bush. Leaving Fort Resolution on December 17th with the dog-mail, Bompas finally reached Fort Simpson early Christmas morning, and was warmly welcomed by a very surprised and joyful Mr. Kirkby. This amazing man was to make many such incredible journeys during the course of his long wilderness ministry.

A meeting between Kirkby, McDonald and Bompas in August, 1866, resulted in McDonald looking after Fort Yukon and the Yukon basin, Kirkby looking after Fort Simpson, and Bompas being given a "roving commission" rather than a settled mission post. Bompas made his first trip to Fort Yukon -- the place he left England to reach -- in July, 1869.

We again find Bompas in the Yukon in the winter of 1871-72. The following is an excerpt from a letter he wrote from La Pierre's House at that time.

I have been much cheered in my work among them (the Loucheux) by finding them all eager for instruction and warm-hearted in their reception of the missionary. Each day I spent in Loucheux camps was like a Sunday, as the Indians were clustered around me from early in the morning till late at night, learning prayers, hymns, and Scripture lessons as I was able to teach them. I never met with so earnest

desires after God's word, nor have I passed so happy a time since I left England: indeed, I think I may say that, had I ever found at home such a warm attachment of the people to their minister, and so zealous a desire for instruction, I should not have been a missionary. These mountain Loucheux seem the 'fewest of all people', but I cannot help hoping they are 'a chosen race'. 7

Bompas commented that he must have walked a thousand miles that winter, but he felt this was no further than he used to walk in the streets of London. That summer was spent in the Upper Yukon where some Indians had been under instruction for ten years. Forty-five adults and eighty children were baptized.

Elsewhere events that would influence the work in the Yukon were happening. Bishop Machray went to England in 1871 to plead that Rupert's Land be made a Metropolitan See. The General Committee of the Church Missionary Society met on June 10th, 1872, and decided to split the episcopate. John Horden was to be Bishop of Moosonee, John McLean Bishop of Saskatchewan, and William Bompas Bishop of Athabaska-Mackenzie. Hearing the news in the spring of 1873, Bompas made another incredibly rapid journey, this time to England, which he reached on February 3rd, 1874. He had gone to persuade the C.M.S. against its decision to make him bishop, but was unsuccessful. Bompas was consecrated Bishop of Athabasca on May 3rd, 1874. While in England he studied eye treatments so he might be able to help with the great northern problem of snow-blindness. He also married and brought his bride back to Canada with him.

Robert McDonald was appointed Archdeacon in 1875. On September 4th, 1876, the first Synod met at Fort Simpson. It partially consisted of the following from the Yukon basin: Mr. K. McDonald, catechist at Tukudh (Loucheux) Mission and Rampart House; Mr. Henry Venn, native catechist at La Pierre's House; and Archdeacon Robert McDonald, missionary at Ft. McPherson on the Peel River. At the time of the Synod meeting there were approximately ten thousand souls in the diocese including five thousand Roman Catholics and three thousand Anglicans. The Synod decided each mission was to have a building as an outward symbol of the Church's presence. It was announced that more than one hundred had been confirmed recently at the Loucheux mission.

By 1881 the Loucheux were able to teach each other,⁸ but Bompas was quite concerned for the Indians of the Upper Yukon left unministered since McDonald was forced to leave in 1871. The Indians, upon seeing the Bishop, pointed to a smoldering fire and said,

- That is how you left us. You kindled the fire of the Gospel among us, and you left it untended to die out again. Why have you done this?⁹

Bompas made strong appeals for men and money for this work and urged that the Church ignore international boundaries since the Americans had done nothing. Finally an anonymous gift¹⁰ was received and the Rev. T.H. Canham, a young C.M.S. missionary who had served at Portage La Prairie for the winter, made his way by

boat and canoe to Ft. McPherson in 1882. After a few years there, where he did missionary work and became competent in Eskimo and Loucheux, he went to the Lower Yukon where he served for thirty-five years and was made Archdeacon of Selkirk in 1893.

THE FORMATION OF THE DIOCESE OF SELKIRK

Increasing work in the southern part of the Diocese of Athabasca, especially in the Peace River area, resulted in a splitting of the diocese into the modern diocese of Athabasca and the new diocese of Mackenzie River. The latter, which Bompas chose for himself, consisted of the Mackenzie and Yukon River basins north of the 60th parallel. The first Synod of the new diocese, meeting in Fort Simpson in August, 1886, realized that the mountains formed a real barrier between the Mackenzie and Yukon basins. The Provincial Synod agreed and formed another new diocese in 1891, which Bompas chose. It was still large -- equivalent to the modern Yukon -- covering over two-hundred-thousand square miles of wilderness. The Bishop named it "Selkirk". When this name was criticized, he replied,

Selkirk, I presume may be shortened from 'Selig Kirke', or 'Holy Church', which does not seem offensive as the name of a diocese. Manitoba means, I suppose, 'Spirit Narrows', and Athabasca, 'Plenty of Narrows', and Saskatchewan, 'Strong Current', and Moosonee, 'Moose Deer Walk', and Qu'Appelle, 'Who Calls?'. And I hardly see why 'Selkirk' should be deemed an inferior name to these." 11

HARDSHIPS ON THE MISSIONS

One can easily pass over the work of the various

men giving a quick outline without realizing the hardships each of them had to face. Here we might look at the tragic story of the Rev. V.C. Sim, who was placed at Rampart House in 1881. In the fall of 1884 while at a point on the Porcupine River, Sim was given a very rough time by a medicine man who would not let him sleep. Besides being overtired, Sim was on the point of starvation when he returned to Rampart House. After spending the winter nursing sick Indians, his own health gave out. A messenger was sent to Canham, two-hundred-thirty miles away on the Peel. After coming to Sim, Canham made a return trip to Peel River to get Sim's mail. Although Canham got the mail back to Rampart House, Sim was too sick to read it and passed away on May 11th, 1885.

Another tragic story surrounds the Rev. J.W. Ellington, ordained at the 1886 Synod in Fort Simpson, and stationed at Fortymile.¹² The practical jokes of the miners made his life so hard that he broke down physically and mentally, and had to be returned to England.

The Bishop went to Fortymile in 1891 and later that winter moved on to Rampart House, the most remote of his mission stations. By 1892 Canham and his wife ¹³ were at Fort Selkirk, a Mr. Wallis and his wife at Rampart House, and the Bishop and Mr. B. Totty, a deacon -- priested July 15th, 1894 -- were at Fortymile. Unfortunately Mrs. Wallis' health gave out so she and her

husband left after only a year in the North.

The experience of "poor Ellington" shows that the position at Fortymile was not an easy one for missionaries. The miner's meetings style of government¹⁴ did little at first to protect the native people from the demoralizing influence of drink. Eventually the miners began to check the practice of supplying them with liquor. Although the whites made up the vast majority of Fortymile's population, the Indians still predominated at church services. In January, 1895, the Bishop reported there were about twenty miners attending the Sunday evening English services. The miners showed their appreciation of the Bishop's work at Christmas, 1892, when fifty-three of them got together to present Mrs. Bompas with a gold nugget.

For a look at the conditions the Bishop and his wife lived under, let us look at the description provided by Pierre Berton.

"I feel so long dead and buried that I cannot think a short visit home, as if from the grave, would be of much use," wrote William Bompas, a Church of England bishop who found himself in Fortymile. A Cambridge graduate who could read his Bible in Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac, he was the fourth son of that same London advocate on whom Dickens had modeled his "Serjeant Buzfuz" in Pickwick Papers. His predecessor had been driven to literal madness by the practical jokes of the miners, but Bompas was far too tough for that -- a giant of a man with a high dome, a hawk nose, piercing eyes, and the flowing beard of a Moses. He baked his own bread, eschewed all dainties, drank his sugarless coffee from an iron cup, ate from a tin plate with a knife his only utensil, slept in the corner of a boat or a hole in the snow or on the floor of a log hut,

and allowed himself no holidays. His only furniture was a box which he used for a seat; he had torn down shelves, cupboard, and table to make a coffin for a dead Indian because lumber was so scarce. And he thought nothing of making a present of his trousers to a pantless native and mashing home in his red flannels.

For almost half a century he lived in isolation, and he was resigned to it. When his wife joined him at Fortymile in 1892, they had not seen each other for five years. She was the daughter of a fashionable London doctor, and had been brought up in Italy. On those dark winter afternoons when she was not on the trail with her husband, she sat quietly in the mission hall with its cotton-drill walls, reading her Dante in the original or -- if the keys were not frozen stiff -- playing her little harmonium.¹⁵

DEVELOPING THE DIOCESE

After Wallis left in 1893, the Bishop had only two men, Canham and Totty, and a woman school teacher, Miss Susan Mellet, who came north in that year to become the first single white woman in the Yukon. It was a rather discouraging period. R.J. Bowen volunteered to go north in 1895. When he arrived on August 4th, 1895, Bompas left for Selkirk the same day, leaving Bowen alone for ten days in charge of the Indians whose language he did not know. In 1896 the Rev. H.A. Naylor and his wife, and Mr. F.F. Flewelling arrived along with the Rt. Rev. Rowe, Bishop of Alaska. Rowe asked Bompas to look after Fort Yukon until the American church would be able to look after the Indians, thus giving Bompas the freedom over the Alaskan border that he had always wanted. Bowen was able to take up the work among the miners through a grant from the Colonial and Continental Church

Society.

One of the Bishop's problems was the increasing number of half-breed children that were resulting from the influx of miners. The first residential school at Fortymile marked the beginning of the Anglican Church's concern for education in the Yukon. Miss Mellet, the teacher, writes:

The school...was a great mixture, all sorts and sizes and ages come to learn to read -- men, women and children... We had nothing in the way of equipment...no pictures, no maps, no globes, but the people themselves were so willing to help and be helped. It was their first school and they loved it.¹⁶

Bowen went to Circle City for a brief period "on loan" to Bishop Rowe. When Dawson City sprang up, he went there, arriving in June, 1897. Building a church at Dawson proved to be difficult as most stampedeers were too busy looking for gold to help build, and the cost of labor was fifteen dollars a day and lumber was twenty-five cents a foot. A grant from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was diverted from Fortymile, where it was intended to be used, to Dawson. The result was a log church named St. Paul's. Although the stampedeers did not help with the construction, many of them came from good church backgrounds and appreciated the work of the church. After the parish was running, Bompas relieved Bowen long enough so the latter could return to Fortymile and marry Susan Mellet.

The Church Missionary Society supported work among the Indians while the Colonial and Continental

Church Society supported work among the Whites. The Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge helped with building costs and scholarships for Indians. The Rev . G.W. Lyon, sponsored by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, crossed the Chilkoot in the fall of 1897 and ministered to the people at Bennett Lake until breakup the next spring. He then headed downstream but was drowned along with a servant on Lake Laberge. Their bodies were found by the Mounties and buried on the shore of the lake.

The terrible sanitation at Dawson City contributed to Bowen coming down with malaria in 1899 which forced him to return, temporarily, to England. August 1st, 1900, found the Bowens back in the Yukon in response to the Bishop's plea to go to the new town of Whitehorse. Bowen's widow -- on the occasion of the opening of the new Christ Church Cathedral in Whitehorse in 1960 -- wrote an interesting account of her and her husband's return to Whitehorse and of the building of the church in 1900.

We had to return to England on account of Mr. Bowen's health and Bishop Bompas said, "I will not tell you to come back until I have to", but before the end of the year was out he had written asking him to return, if possible. The Bishop's burden was Whitehorse and so we returned. We lived in a tent, indeed, two tents. One was the Rectory and the other was used as a church, where we were able to house the organ and things we had brought from home. Mr. Bowen got much help from the men of the district... In due time, the place was ready and everyone felt glad it was ready. Those who helped and those who so faithfully worshipped in the church tent were very pleased.

A shelf was put over the chancel and made a place for us to sleep. We were always thankful that we were not sleep-walkers as there was no railing, nothing but vacancy. We were grateful for a ladder to reach it. The lower part was a living room and kitchen and vestry. A partition was put in to separate the place of worship from our living quarters. The place upstairs was not cold and the snow did not bother us for the roof was very good. But now and again when the wind blew very hard we knew it must be snowing. Our house, as you know, was a place of refuge and comfort to many... The Rectory was begun in January, 1900⁽¹⁸⁹⁹⁾ when the weather registered 26 or 27 below zero. The men who worked must have been very cold, but it did not take away their enthusiasm. They put on their caps and mittens and parkas and anyone who could drive a nail or spike was prepared to do his bit. Someone wrote not long ago to ask for the names of those heroes, but I could not remember all... The wife of the Rector cooked the dinners for them. We had little variety, but no one grumbled as the rule in all camps was, "The man who kicks, cooks" so even if the meal was not up to the mark, they seemed to enjoy it. Of course my specialty, homemade bread, covered a multitude of bad things such as no eggs, no milk, but they agreed we did very well considering.¹⁷

The little log church built by Bowen was in use until 1960 and still stands beside the present Christ Church Cathedral in Whitehorse.

In August, 1901, Bishop and Mrs. Bompas moved to Caribou Crossing to open a mission there. After using Bishop Ridley's¹⁸ tent, an old roadhouse was purchased to serve as a mission house. The sign proclaiming the room to be a "bar room" was discreetly covered with an appropriate picture. Caribou Crossing -- later renamed Carcross by Bompas -- was to be the last mission established by this amazing man. With the transfer of the residential school from Fortymile in 1903, Carcross became

the main Anglican Yukon Indian mission.

Illness was to strike Bowen again in May, 1903, forcing him to leave the Yukon for good. Meanwhile, Isaac O. Stringer, a missionary on the remote Herschel Island of the Yukon's Arctic coast, developed eye trouble and was ordered to leave the Arctic. He succeeded Bowen at Whitehorse in November, 1903. When Bishop Bompas was forced by his old age to retire, Stringer was chosen to succeed him. After being consecrated in Winnipeg on December 17th, 1905, by Archbishop Matheson of Rupert's Land, Stringer, a native of Bruce County, Ontario, took charge.¹⁹

Bompas wanted to go to little Salmon River to open an Indian mission there but Stringer persuaded him against it. The great "Apostle of the North" died at Carcross on June 9th, 1906. During his lifetime Bompas, as well as pioneering the mission work in three dioceses, wrote many books and made many translations into native languages.²⁰

BISHOP STRINGER'S PERIOD

The Rev. H.A. Cody, in response to an appeal by Stringer, entered the diocese in 1904 to become a traveling missionary. He travelled the trail to such places as McClintock, Tagish, Tantalus, Little and Big Salmon, Hootalinqua, Livingstone Creek, Champagne Landing and Dalton Post.

The diocesan name, "Selkirk", was never fully appreciated as it was confused with the place of the

same name in Manitoba, and with the area of the Selkirk mountains in British Columbia. There was no confusion about the name "Yukon" which was adopted on August 14th, 1907, shortly after the death of Bompas, who had chosen the original name of "Selkirk".

Bompas had pioneered the Yukon. To Stringer fell the task of organizing the diocese. The rigorous demands of the frontier were still being made. The story of the "Bishop who ate his boots" demonstrates this well. In the autumn of 1909 Bishop Stringer and Archdeacon Whittacker had been visiting the Eskimos on the Arctic coast. The Bishop, with C.F. Johnston, tried to take a short-cut to Dawson City over the Rockies from Peel River. The weather broke sooner than they expected, food ran short, game had migrated and the travellers became lost. The following account is taken from Stringer's diary.

Thursday, October 21st: Breakfast of seal-skin boot, soles and tops boiled and toasted. Soles better than uppers. Soup of small scraps of bacon and spoonful of flour (the scrapings of the flour bag). The last we had. Tied up Mr. Johnston's fingers. Concluded we were in Peel River... Heard children's voices (later in the day) in the distance and then saw horses on left hand about a mile ahead. We stopped and thanked God for bringing us in sight of human habitation.²¹

The first Synod of the Diocese was called by Stringer in Whitehorse on September 10th - 12th, 1907. The Synod report lists the following clergy and missions: Bishop Stringer (Dawson City); Archdeacon T.H. Canham (St. Andrew's, Fort Selkirk); Rev. B. Totty (St. Barn-

abus', Moosehide); Rev. John Hawksley (St. Saviour's, Carcross); Rev. H.A. Cody (Christ Church, Whitehorse); Rev. A.S. O'Meara (Conrad); Rev. J. Comyn-Ching (Curate-in-charge, Dawson City). Lay Readers were: Mr. A.C. Field (St. John's, Fortymile); W.D. Young (Conrad); Captain Galpin (Quartz Creek and Bonanza). Three women lay helpers were present from Carcross Boarding School, as were two Indian Catechists, Joseph Kunizzi and Amos Njoolti.

The Bishop told the Synod about his concern for the Indians and the need for a treaty which would assure them of hunting and fishing rights, and would provide housing and medical care. He also reported his trip to England to seek funds and to set up a Bishop's endowment. A diocesan publication was recommended (leading to the Northern Lights). Stringer also mentioned the need for co-operation with the Diocese of Caledonia and suggested the establishment of reading rooms for miners.

By this time the Klondike stampede was over. The centers of population were more or less organized as they would be for the next thirty-five years. There would be no more boom towns or rapid expansion until the construction of the Alaska Highway. The Indians would never be the same as they were before the gold rush. A new group of half-breed children, left behind by the stampede, and the Indians would be a main concern of the church for many years. Whitehorse, Dawson City

and the Gold Creeks were the only real white parishes in the diocese. The rest were Indian with the exception of an Eskimo mission on Herschel Island in the Arctic.

The second Synod met at Dawson City on August 3rd - 7th, 1911. Bishop Stringer announced the ordination of the native catechist, Amos Njoolti, in March of that year.²² The Church's concern for the native people was reflected in discussion about the government's refusal to accept responsibility for Indian education, the problem of T.B., and the economic situation of the natives. Dawson City was declared the "See City", and all Synods would be held there until after the Second World War.

The third Synod met in June, 1915. Again we can see the Church's concern for the Indians. The Rev. J. Hawksley was appointed the first government Indian agent in the Yukon. A new school had been built at Carcross with government funds. A program of reading rooms also had been introduced into the various parishes. The Whitehorse church was carrying out a full program of midweek activities. The Indian missions were having problems with poor attendance at services and with children going on hunting and trapping trips instead of attending school.

By 1920, the time of the fourth Synod, the Bishop's endowment was complete. Another native catechist, named Kendi, had been ordained and the government was supporting day schools for the Indians. At the

1923 Synod it was reported that Amos Njoolti had died. Two important developments had occurred. The Carcross School -- called Chooutla School -- now came under the Mission Society of the Church in Canada and was financed by it rather than by the diocese, although the Bishop, along with the Society, chose the staff. The second development was the establishment of St. Paul's hostel in Dawson. It had been discovered that many children of white miners had never had any schooling. When the boarding school was established in 1920 under Miss E. J. Naftel, these children could attend the Dawson public school. Some teen-aged children had to begin in the primary grades. In 1920 there were four children, but the number increased to twenty-one by 1923. The finances came from fees charged to parents and from a government per-capita grant.

The 1928 Synod reported the consolidation of Eskimo work under Archdeacon Fleming. We also find reference to the use of student ministers in the summer months. In 1931, Bishop Stringer's last meeting with the Yukon Diocese, we find a residential school has been opened at Shingle Point on the Arctic coast under the Rev. H.S. Shepherd. There were thirty to forty children at this school with thirty-two at the Dawson City residence.

ARCHBISHOP ADAMS AND BISHOP GEDDES

The eighth Synod met in 1936 under Bishop William Archibald Geddes. Arthur Henry Sovereign was Bishop of

the Yukon for a brief period (January 6th - September 22nd, 1932) after Stringer's elevation to Archbishop of Rupert's Land. The financial disaster of the Machray defalcations²³ forced a re-organization of the various dioceses, thus accounting for Sovereign's short term of office. Bishop Geddes, transferred to the Yukon after being consecrated fourth Bishop of Mackenzie River in 1929, had spent seven years at Herschel Island. Herschel and Shingle Point were transferred to the new Diocese of the Arctic when it was formed in September, 1933. The eighth Synod of the Yukon reported that a registered nurse, Miss Mildred McCabe, was sent to Old Crow with the co-operation of the Indian Affairs Department, thus beginning a long period of co-operation between the Department and the Anglican Church in that community.

Records for the period between the eighth Synod in 1936 and the ninth in 1948 are very scarce with even the diocesan publication, Northern Lights, discontinued during this time. This is rather unfortunate because the Second World War and the construction of the Alaska Highway brought many changes. The following paragraphs have drawn their information from the limited sources at this writer's disposal.

The financial problems that resulted from both the Machray defalcations, and from the depression, hit the Yukon diocese very hard. These financial problems, coupled with the decline in Yukon population, contribu-

ted to the general decline of the diocese which was transferred to the ecclesiastical province of British Columbia in 1939.

The ninth Synod was held in Dawson City on June 22nd - 24th, 1948, under Archbishop Walter Robert Adams. Bishop Geddes had died at Vancouver on April 16th, 1947. The amalgamation of the two dioceses of Caledonia, in northern British Columbia, and Yukon had often been discussed. As early as 1931 the General Synod adopted an Anglican National Commission recommendation (XXVB7) that "on the occurrence of an Episcopal vacancy in either the Diocese of Caledonia or Yukon, the two be united under one Bishop."²⁴ In September, 1947 several meetings dealing with the Dioceses of Athabasca, Yukon, and Arctic were held in Saskatoon with no settlement being reached. As a result, the Electoral body²⁵ got around the problem by appointing Archbishop W.R. Adams, Metropolitan of British Columbia, to serve as Bishop of the Yukon.

There were only three persons who had attended the 8th Synod present at the ninth. They were the Rev. Richard Martin of Moosehide, a native who was at the 1915 Synod as a Catechist; Mrs. Cowaret, a lay reader at Carmacks, who had been in service since 1920; and Canon Chappel who was present for the first time at the 1936 Synod. Some of the permanent changes within the diocese were noted: the Indians would be forced to integrate with the Whites; no diocesan financial

balance sheets had been compiled since 1942; there was a real shortage of clergy; many buildings had fallen into disrepair; a new Bishop's House had been bought in Whitehorse (and the old one sold in Dawson) so the Bishop could be closer to the new center of population; and the Roman Church was becoming very active -- especially among the Indians.

In 1949 a new, and very successful, phase of the Anglican Church's work in the Yukon began. We will turn to it now.

THE ST. AGNES VAN AND HOSTEL

Two women, Miss Hasell and Miss Sayle, using a special van built in Winnipeg, began the work of the St. Agnes van along the Alaska Highway in 1949. The van itself -- similar to the modern truck-campers used by many tourists -- provided the van workers with a mobile cabin. Paying their own board and room with some help from friends, these two ladies called into highway stopping-places, highway maintenance camps, mining camps, the government experimental farm near Haines Junction, the customs camp at the Alaska border, and at the Indian settlements at Kluskas and Champagne where the Church had not been serving. They held vacation schools where there were children and services where there were interested adults. In the report to the 1953 Synod, Miss Hasell reported 107 highway families, or 255 children, using the Sunday School by Post. This was a larger number than was registered in Sunday Schools of the

diocese.

There was a second development resulting from the St Agnes van work. The women recognized the need for a hostel in Whitehorse to enable older boys and girls from the Alaska Highway to attend school. The result was the St. Agnes Hostel which opened in 1952. Besides serving the scattered residents along the Alaska Highway from Steamboat Mountain (mile 360) to the Alaskan border, and establishing the St. Agnes Hostel in Whitehorse, these two ladies staked out property for churches in Watson Lake in 1951, and at Haines Junction in 1950. St. John the Baptist Church was built at Watson Lake with contributions from the Armed Services Chaplaincies and was dedicated on St. John the Baptist's day in 1957. St. Christopher's Church, named after the patron Saint of travel in honor of the Alaska Highway travellers, was eventually built at Haines Junction. Although Miss Hasell and Miss Sayle no longer personally travel the highway, the successor to their original van is still (1966) a familiar sight to the Alaska Highway residents.

BISHOP GREENWOOD

Archbishop Adams resigned in 1951 and the Rev. Tom Greenwood was elected to follow him in 1952. Bishop Greenwood held his first Synod in the new "See City" of Whitehorse on August 18th - 20th, 1953. By now the Indian work was concentrated at Carcross with the Dawson Hostel being shut down and the pupils transferred to Chooutla at Carcross. With the exception of Mayo,²⁶

which had built a new church, and the St. Agnes van, reports to this Synod were disappointing. Because Teslin had been vacant from 1944-1952, most of the Indians had gone over to the Roman Church. Selkirk and Minto were vacant and the Indians were no longer trapping. Mrs. Cowerat, lay reader, was serving at Carmacks.

The eleventh Synod, meeting in 1955, reported a new government-built residential school housing one-hundred-fifty students at Carcross. All Saints Church at Keno Hill²⁷ mine site was opened in 1954. There were problems from the Baptist Indian mission in Whitehorse²⁸ as the following passage from the Bishop's address to Synod indicates.

When this School (Baptist Mission) was first begun it was understood that children of Anglican families would be able to attend their own Church and receive instruction from their own clergy. This part of the agreement has not been kept, and in spite of requests and correspondence with the authorities, no response has been forthcoming. This makes clear that we must do all that we can to urge parents of our children to send them to Chooutla.²⁹

The report from Dawson City indicated the Indians there were being attracted into the "gospel halls". Sunday School by Air was being broadcast in Dawson. Old Crow reported a new church completed in 1954 as well as the establishment of a Roman Catholic mission in 1951. All points except Ross River were manned.

The twelfth Synod, meeting in 1957, reported a new church at Elsa.³⁰ This was built with the help of the United Keno Hills Mining Company. A new congregation

was formed at Bear Creek while the white and native congregations at Mayo were united. Mr. Jack Kenyon, of the Church Army, was serving the points of Teslin, Brook's Brook and Watson Lake. The Venerable C.W.P. Kirksey, Archdeacon of the Hart and Alaska Highways for the Diocese of Caledonia was present at Synod. Bishop Greenwood expressed the continuing Anglican concern for the native people in his Bishop's address.

While in most of our missions we no longer are engaged in work among the natives, we must never forget that they were among the first fruits of the Gospel in these parts. They constitute, therefore, our first charge and more so as they are becoming involved in the numerous changes which are taking place in the Yukon.³¹

The Bishop continued by pointing out the problems that had arisen from the opening of the beer parlours to the Indians.

The 1959 Synod reports the opening of "Camp Gikhyichok" (Bishop's Camp) for Indians on Braeburn Lake. The Moosehide school finally closed down. The Carcross church, which had been closed, was re-opened, but got a poor response from the people. The old R.C.M.P. barracks at Haines was purchased for the church and rectory.

The Yukon Diocese remained a missionary one. A report in the March, 1960 issue of Northern Lights tells of a change in the diocese's financial support.

For about one hundred years the Church in England has been sending help both in men and money for the work of the Church in the Yukon. Officially that help ceased in 1940, when the Church in Canada decided to be responsible

for its own work. The cruse has never really dried up, however, and there is still a fairly steady stream coming each year through the Yukon Committee of the British Columbia and Yukon Church Aid Society. We owe a very real debt of gratitude to my Commissary, Canon Gilbert Williams and to Miss M. Babington, who have been largely responsible for handling the affairs of the Yukon. With the closing of the B.C.Y.C., the Yukon Committee which met in January has decided to continue the Yukon end of the work and to function as the Yukon Diocesan Association. The purpose of the Association will be to encourage the prayers of the faithful for the work of the Church in the Yukon; to encourage men and women to consider service in this part of the world; and to provide an avenue by which financial aid can be made available for the Diocese of Yukon. A new Committee is being formed in England...³²

In 1960, the Rev. E. Haldenby was installed as Archdeacon of the Klondike, and Miss Hasell and Miss Sayle of the St. Agnes van, who had been serving for eleven years on the Alaska Highway, were replaced by Miss Alexander and Miss Savery. Another development taking place that year was the opening of a "Protestant Hostel" for Indians run by the Government. This Whitehorse residence was to take all students from grade five and up, thus leaving Chooutla at Carcross with lower grades only.

Bishop Greenwood resigned at the end of 1961 to become Assistant Bishop of Chester in the Parish of Witgate, England. The Rev. Henry Marsh of Toronto was elected the new Bishop and was consecrated on March 25th, 1962.

NOTES ON THE PARISHES

The first missionary work in the Yukon was done

at Fort Yukon before it became American territory. We have seen what happened to "poor Sim" after this work was transferred to Rampart House. When the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned this post in 1894, it remained vacant as a mission post until 1910 when a native, the Rev. Amos Njootli opened it. Rampart House mission apparently died a slow death with the work being shifted to Old Crow, about fifty miles to the east. Boon tells us something of this latter post.

One of their (McDonald and Bompas) first converts was John Tizya, who learned to read the Bible, Prayer Book and hymn book in the Tukudh language, and then taught the boys and girls around him to read their own language. His teaching was done in skin houses by open fire-light, and at the end of forty years of this work he became blind. After John Tizya saw log cabins for the first time he decided to build one for himself at the mouth of the Crow River. Thus he laid the foundations of the settlement where the people live today. ...Mrs. Clara Tizya, a daughter-in-law, reported: "Here John Tizya used his own cabin for Church and called the people to service by beating a frying-pan with a stick. He used up a good many frying-pans before he was given a bell by Bishop Stringer. Later the people built their own Church, mission house and small schoolhouse. When John died, he was laid to rest by the people he loved and whom he had tried to show how to be good Christians."

Later, in Bishop Geddes' time, the Rev. Julius Kendi, a native priest, and Mrs. Kendi were sent to Old Crow from Mayo, where they had spent ten years among the White People. "Mrs. Kendi organized the first W.A. branch in the village. Every woman and girl took part in the work and in two years, through their efforts, the Church had^{been} completely decorated, new pews and stoves bought and many pretty beaded frontals made for the altar." It was from this small village of generous-minded and devoted Christian people that the first contribution to the Restoration Fund (after the Machray defalcations) was received

in 1933.... They also sent, early in the Second World War, a gift of \$393 for the relief of homeless and orphaned children in England.³³

Old Crow completed a new church in 1954. The 1959 Synod noted that Joe Kyikavich, a former chief, had competed forty years of service as a Catechist to the Old Crow Indians. In 1961 a Public Health nursing station and a government school were built thus ending the joint venture by the Anglican Church and the Yukon Government.³⁴

Fortymile became a ghost town after the Klondike discovery and the removal of the residential school to Carcross in 1903. Another of the early missions, St. Andrew's at Fort Selkirk, has lasted until the building of the Whitehorse-Dawson highway. The story of Fort Selkirk is, in many ways, the story of Mrs. Kathleen Cowaret, who, as Miss Martin, answered Bishop Stringer's plea for a teacher in February, 1916. She was made a Lay Reader in 1927 and in 1929 married a Selkirk trapper, Alex Coward, but took the liberty to change slightly the spelling of her new name. When the new highway was built in 1953, the Indians moved between Minto and Pelly Crossing, with the Cowards accompanying them. For forty-two years, until her death in 1958, this woman served the Anglican Church in many and various capacities while caring for the Selkirk band.

St. Paul's Parish, Dawson City, is one of the oldest continuous parishes in the diocese. Established by the Rev. R.J. Bowen in the gold rush days of 1897, St.

Paul's was the Cathedral Parish until 1953. An interesting historical note on the buildings of the Parish is found in the September, 1962 issue of Northern Lights.

...Bishop Bompas was one of the original committee which appealed for the construction of the Good Samaritan Hospital³⁵ in 1898, which opened in July of that year. In 1922 the hospital was no longer in use, and the buildings were acquired by the Anglican Church to be used as St. Paul's Hostel, since the work had outgrown the smaller residence first used for that purpose.

By 1944 there were 44 children in residence, but the building of the Alaska Highway resulted in a shift of population to Whitehorse, fewer people lived on the river and by 1952 only 10 children were in residence. With the opening of St. Agnes Hostel in Whitehorse in 1951, a special request was made to Indian Affairs Branch to allow the remaining young pupils to go into residence at Carcross and the hostel in Dawson became vacant.

On the ceiling of the W.A. room the outline of the operating-room skylight can still be seen, and various Dawson residents can point out rooms where they were born or where they had their children.

It is hoped that further funds may be raised to complete a modernized section which will serve for church use during the cold months, when the cost of heating St Paul's Church is prohibitive. Meantime, the old building doubles as parish hall and meeting place for many groups.³⁶

Two small congregations, Bear Creek's Christ the Pioneer parish, and Granville, where services are held in homes, are served by the Dawson priest. St. Barnabas' Mission at the Indian village of Moosehide, established in 1903 about three miles below Dawson City, is also associated with St. Paul's in modern times. The school was Anglican, and the Rev. Richard Martin, a

native deacon who lost his eye-sight when a hunting rifle exploded, took services in the Takudh language for many years. Here is what he reported to the 1948 Synod.

I don't understand talk English very well. On August 2nd, 1926, I get ordained. That Fall Bishop send me to La Pierre House. I go over before Christmas. On winter I make trip to Dawson, 100 miles. I go by dog team. Bad storm, cold weather, 50 below zero at that time. Then I get accident in 1927. I go hospital in Dawson, then I go Vancouver to see eye specialist, and come back here in Fall. Minister tell me "Richard, you make service in morning," and I help him by doing this. Two years before Mr. Bridge came, I took Indian service in morning, and Jimmy Wood help me with English service in afternoon. Now, it is good thing I get helper in Mr. Bridge. He help me and tell me things about Bible and Church. Thank you everybody. That's all.³⁷

After roads reached Dawson, Moosehide declined. In 1959 the school closed but Mr. Martin carried on. By 1961 services were being held every second Sunday for the five remaining families.

Christ Church, Whitehorse, another old parish, is now the strongest self-supporting one in the diocese as well as being the "See" parish. A new Cathedral was opened in 1960, and a new rectory in 1962. We have noted elsewhere the St. Agnes Hostel.³⁸ The biggest change in this parish occurred with the building of the Alaska Highway. In 1941 there were about 900 summer, and 400-500 winter residents. In 1942-43 there were close to 35,000 people, mostly American service men. After the War the population dropped to 3,500 but Whitehorse remained the administrative center of the Highway and

the largest town in the Yukon.

Teslin is another parish with a long history going back to the early period of Bishop Stringer's episcopacy when all the Indians in the area were Anglican. A long period with no incumbent³⁹ combined with great activity on the part of the Roman Catholic Church, meant most of the Indians became Roman and never returned to the Anglican Church when Teslin was once again manned by an Anglican. Although there now are a few Anglican Indians in the area, the resident clergyman serves the Protestant whites there, at Brook's Brook and at Swift River maintenance camps on the Alaska Highway.

St. George's Mission, Carmacks, is another of those parishes established long ago, but having a spotty history. Bishop Pompas had died before he could establish a mission at Little Salmon near Carmacks, so the Rev. H.A. Cody opened it. In recent years Deaconess Hilda Hellaby, D.D., served there, but it is often vacant. A new church was built in 1961 with donations from outside the diocese. An old school house was converted into a rectory in 1963 after a house trailer proved unsatisfactory in the northern climate.

The parish around United Keno Mines has developed in more recent years. The 1948 Synod reported four points on this parish: Mayo, Mayo Indian Village, Elsa and Keno. St. Mary's Parish Hall was built at Mayo in 1950. Deaconess Hellaby, who was to spend many years around Mayo, took over after the tragic death of the Rev. C.W.N.

Wareham in 1952.⁴⁰ All Saints congregation was begun at Keno City in 1954, and the Indian Mayo parish, St Mark's joined with St. Mary's Parish. St. Peter's Church, Elsa, was built by United Keno Hill Mines in 1956, and All Saints Church was built at Keno City.

St. Christopher's Mission, Haines, began in 1955 on the property bought by the St. Agnes van workers. The current priest now serves the northwestern end of the Alaska Highways including Haines Junction, Champagne, Canyon Creek, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing, Donjek Pumping Station and Beaver Creek. The priest at St. John the Baptist Mission, Watson Lake -- the second parish begun by the van workers -- has a rather unique role. He takes services at the Canadian-Tungsten Camp (Cantung) across the Northwest Territories border for the Arctic Diocese, and holds regular services at Lower Post for the Diocese of Caledonia, as well as holding regular services in Watson Lake for the Yukon Diocese.

There is a final note that should be added to the section on the parishes. Atlin is in the Diocese of Caledonia, but it is geographically connected to the Yukon. The Rev. F.L. Stephenson, who had served among Fort Simpson Indians, walked over the White Pass and on to Atlin in early spring, 1899. With the aid of miners, he built St. Martin's Church, which is still in use today. Mr. Stephenson remained at Atlin until 1906. The Rev. M.A. Jackson served Atlin from 1906 to 1910. St. Martin's was empty until 1927. At the present time

there is no resident clergyman, but occasional services are taken by the Yukon clergy and by the Bishop of Caledonia.

Bishop Ridley of Caledonia had been active arround Lake Bennett during the gold rush.⁴¹ Another Caledonia parish of interest to this paper is Cassiar. The Asbestos Company built a "Protestant" church when it built the town and the Anglican Church has provided a resident clergyman.

THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

This chapter must not be closed without saying something about the support the Anglican W.A. has given the Anglican Church in the Yukon. This is true of both the Dominion W.A. and the Diocesan W.A. which was formed in 1904. Anyone who has worked in a church where the women have been active knows what valuable support they give. The Yukon ladies were no exception. On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Yukon Women's Auxiliary, the ladies produced a biographical history called Five Pioneer Women of the Anglican Church.⁴²

CONCLUSION

This chapter has covered the history of the Anglican Church in the Yukon from 1861, when Kirkby crossed the mountains to LaPierre's House until the appointment of Bishop Henry Marsh in 1962. Further comments on the Anglican Church and its relationship to other churches are contained in chapter five, which reviews the total picture of the Church in the Yukon.

FOOTNOTES on Chapter Two

1 p. 204

2 Ibid, p. 81

3 Some reports date St. David's Church from 1856. This may be the date that James and John Hope (v. supra p. 22) did work there. Kirkby, however, established the first permanent mission in 1859.

3a If La Pierre's House and ^{the last (after 1872)} Rampart House were not the same place, they were at least very close together.

4 H.A. Cody, An Apostle of the North, p. 56

5 Boon, Op. Cit., p. 205

6 V. supra, p. 4

7 Cody, Op. Cit. pp. 138f

8 V. Infra, pp. 49, 50

9 Cody, Op. Cit., p. 207

10 This gift is now known to be from the Bishop's brother, George, in England.

11 Cody, Op. Cit., p. 254

12 This mission station was initially called "Buxton" because a Mr. T. Foxwell Buxton donated one-hundred pounds after hearing of an appeal for financial help from Sim.

13 Canham married his bride who came from England and travelled to Fort Simpson by boat and canoe from the wedding in 1885.

14 V. supra, p. 14

15 Pierre Berton, Klondike, pp. 19f

16 Cody, Op. Cit., p. 222

17 Northern Lights, March, 1960, p. 5

18 The Bishop of Caledonia

19 There is an interesting story of Stringer's boyhood days in Kincardine. He and Hugh Clark, later colonel, and Parliamentary secretary under Robert Borden, were downtown during noon hour. Hugh asked Isaac to lend him a dollar for which he handed him the following

acknowledgement, "I.O. Stringer one dollar". The boys started calling Stringer, "I.O." and he adopted the "O" in his name. (V. H.R. Hamilton, The Yukon Story, p. 149)

20 A partial list of Bompas' works includes: four Indian primers (Slavi, Beaver, Dog-Rib, and Tukudh); a prayer book in Chipewayan; Mannual of Devotions, Hymns, Prayers, Catechism etc. (In Beaver); Portions of the Prayer Book Adopted to Slavi; The Gospel in Slavi; and the New Testament in Slavi.

21 Quoted in Diocesan Histories, Yukon, published by the British Columbia and Yukon Church Aid Society.

22 T he Rev. John Ttssietta was the first Loucheux ordained in 1893 by Bishop Reeve of Mackenzie River. He spent his ministry at Peel River and little is known of him.

23 An embezzlement that practically wiped out all of the financial resources -- including endowments -- of the Metropolitan Province of Rupert's Land.

24 Recorded in Records of ninth Synod of the Yukon, p. 18

25 The Executive Committee of Provincial Synod.

26 V. supra, p.. 14

27 Ibid

28 V. infra, Chapter Four, Subsection on Yukon Baptist Mission Society.

29 Synod Report, pp. 22f

30 V. supra, p 14

31 Synod ~~report~~, pp. 22f

32 p. 3

33 Boon, Op. Cit., p. 229

34 V. supra, p. 42

35 V. infra, Chapter Four, Subsection on Presbyterian Church before union.

36 p. 15

37 Report of ninth Synod, p. 25

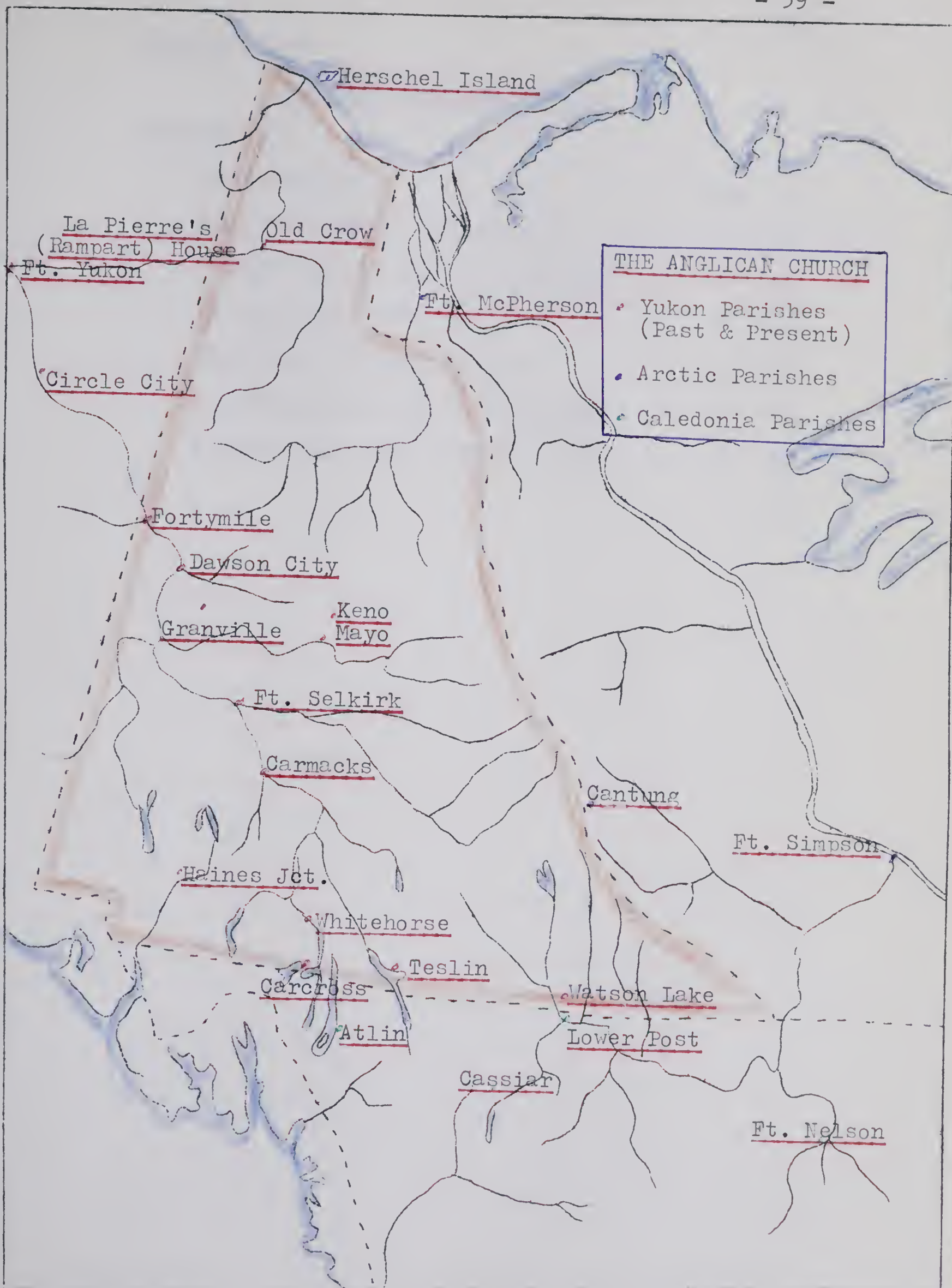
38 V. supra, p. 46

39 V. supra, p. 46

40 Mr. Wareham drowned while fishing

41 V. supra, p. 36 (Bompas using Bishop Ridley's tent)

42 Susan Mellet Bowen (1870-1962); Charlotte Selina Bompas (1830-1918); Charlotte Sarah Canham (1845-1921); Kathleen Martin Cowaret (1888-1958) and Sarah Ann Stringer (1869-1955).



CHAPTER THREE

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

SUBHEADINGS

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INTRODUCTION

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, to whom the care of northwestern Canada fell, established themselves early in the Mackenzie River area. Although the Anglican Church worked in the Mackenzie area -- as we have noted in the previous chapter -- it had much more success in the Yukon basin where the Oblates had not penetrated. The Oblates had a shortage of men around this time, due partially to political events that took place half a century earlier in France.¹ When a few Oblate missionaries did enter the Yukon, they were not able to compete strongly with the Anglicans. The Yukon was, therefore, left to the general oversight of the Jesuits of Alaska until the influx of Klondike stampeders brought back the Oblates. The missionary work of the Catholic Church did not really begin among the Indians until the Second World War and the episcopacy of Bishop Jean Louis Coudert.

This chapter follows the chronological development of the Catholic Church within the area of study. All periods are covered reasonably well although there is a lack of anecdotes on the life and work of the men and women in more modern times.

EARLY EFFORTS BY THE OBLATES

The Oblates, the first Roman Catholic missionaries to enter the Yukon, worked west from the Mackenzie basin as the Anglicans had. A Roman Catholic mission had been founded by Father Henri Grollier at

Fort Good Hope near the mouth of the Mackenzie River in early 1859. Setting out for Fort Yukon to teach the natives in that area, Fr. Grollier reached Fort Peel on September 9th, 1860. Remaining there six weeks, he met a number of the Dene or Loucheux Indians from west of the Rockies. After illness forced him to return to Fort Good Hope, he received assistance he had formerly requested when Fr. P. Seguin and Coadjutor Brother Kearney arrived on August 26th, 1860. Later that same year Bishop Grandin arrived from St. Boniface and remained until January, 1862. Fr. Seguin, taking over from the ailing Fr. Grollier, journeyed over the mountains to La Pierre's House and Fort Yukon, returning to Fort Providence, east of the mountains, in 1863.

A shortage of missionaries prevented further journeys into the Yukon until Fr. Petitot made a twenty day's journey in 1870 from Fort McPherson to Rampart House in the hope of getting to St. Michael's. After discovering that he had missed the Alaska Commercial Company's steamboat, he returned to McPherson after only five days' stay.

The next Oblate trip into the Yukon was an indirect result of the American seizure of Fort Yukon. Francois Mercier, who took over Fort Yukon for the Alaska Commercial Company, abandoned the fort from 1870-1872 because of trouble with the Indians who resented the American take-over and who did not like the new company's business methods. Mercier declined

an offer of troops from the United States Government. Instead, being a devout Catholic, he invited the Oblates² to "come and bring civilization to the Indians". Bishop Clut, after receiving letters from Montreal assuring a welcome for the missionaries, set out in August, 1872 with Father Lecorre to survey the situation. Travelling with a Hudson's Bay Company caravan, they reached La Pierre's House on September 25th, after the "heart breaking portage of eighty miles across the Rockies". Here the bishop received an encouraging letter from Francois Mercier in answer to Petitot's inquiry from Fort Rampart two years earlier. This letter gave Clut assurance that Fort Yukon was re-opened by the Alaska Commercial Company and that Moise Mercier, the post manager, would give the missionaries all help possible in their work with the natives.

Pushing on in a rawhide canoe, with the help of two Catholic Loucheux Indians from Mackenzie delta, and a local guide, they left La Pierre's House on September 26th. Forming ice held them at the west end of the Rampart for five days during which they were entertained by a Loucheux family. They then continued on by sleigh, passing the ruins of Fort Rampart that had been burned by the Hudson's Bay Company.³ They finally reached Fort Yukon on Sunday, October 13th, near starvation, and were cordially received by officials of the Alaska Commercial Company.

While spending that winter at Fort Yukon, they

found they were able to do little missionary work among the Indians since McDonald and Bompas of the Anglican Church had been working among them for ten years.⁴ Instead, they spent their time working on a Loucheux dictionary. When the Yukon River became free of ice on May 15th, 1873, they left by canoe for the Bering Sea. After visiting Indians along the river, Father Lecorre was left to minister at St. Michael's.

Bishop Clut had asked for two additional missionaries for work west of the Rockies before he left Mackenzie on the journey. Fr. Lecorre, while awaiting the arrival of these men, zealously carried on his work with the natives of the Bering coast and for a while conducted a school for Eskimo children. Meanwhile, the Oblate Congregation, realizing it could not adequately staff the Alaska missions, suggested Bishop Seghers of Victoria apply to the Company of Jesus (Jesuits) for help. The Sacred College of Propagation backed this suggestion, and Fr. Lecorre was recalled to the Mackenzie missions in 1874. Thus ended the Oblate efforts in Alaska and -- temporarily -- in the British Yukon.

BISHOP SEGHERS AND THE JESUITS

Since the Oblates withdrew to the Mackenzie delta, the Yukon basin in British territories was left to the care of Bishop Seghers, Bishop of Victoria, and to his successors. The Oblates expected to be informed through the Sacred College of Propagation when it was time to re-enter the area to establish permanent missions.

Archbishop Seghers, accompanied by Fathers Pascal Tosi, S.J., and Alois Robut, S.J., and two laymen, John Fuller and Antoine Prevost, left Victoria in July 1886 bound for northern Alaska via the Chilkoot Pass. Reaching Lake Lindman on July 30th, they offered Holy Mass for the first time in those regions. Shortly after this, Prevost disappeared and was presumed drowned.

After finishing the construction of their own boat they departed on August 20th, reaching Miles Canyon which they portaged with the help of some miners. On September 4th, they were able to celebrate Holy Mass near Old Fort Selkirk at the mouth of the Pelly River. On September 7th, they were welcomed by Harper and Mayo at their store on the mouth of the Stewart. Bishop Seghers, leaving Frs. Tosi and Robant at the store, proceeded on with Fuller and some Indian guides.

They passed McQuesten's store at Fortymile. On September 28th, the group was stopped by bad weather and drifting ice at the mouth of the Tozikakat. The weather broke on October 4th, after they had built a shack. They resumed their journey until they reached Parker's Place. Since Fuller refused to go further, they remained there until November when Seghers and Fuller returned to the shack they built to escape the company of Parker and his companions.

They then set out again on November 15th, this time by sleigh. They stopped at Nuklukayet for a while then went on to Wolf's Head Point, a day's journey from

Nulato.

Around 7:00 a.m. on the morning of November 27th, "uller -- apparently out of his mind -- killed the Bishop. Two Indians took the body to Nulato. It was later taken to St. Michael's and left in the Russian Orthodox Church⁵ after being packed in ice for preservation. Fathers Tosi and Robaut heard about the tragic death on June 5th, 1887 while travelling downstream on the steamer Yukon. Father Tosi left on the first steamer to Victoria. Father Roaut, with the help of two Presbyterian ministers, buried the Bishop temporarily on July 10th in the Russian cemetery of St Michael's. He then returned to Nuklukayet to await the arrival of Fr. Tosi from Victoria. The latter returned via the Chil-koot on September 2nd, accompanied by Fr. Raguru, S.J., and Brother Giordano, S.J. In July, 1888 three Sisters of Saint Ann arrived by the coast and opened Holy Cross School in Koserifsky. By 1892 there were eight Jesuit Fathers, five coadjutor brothers, and six sisters of Saint Ann in northern Alaska. In 1894 the territory was made a prefecture Apostolic, entrusted to the Jesuits with Fr. Tosi as its first Prefect Apostolic. After receiving jurisdiction from Bishop Grouard, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie, for his Jesuits to work in Canadian Yukon Territory, Fr. Tosi sent Fr. William Judge, S.J., to Fortymile in August, 1894.

FATHER WILLIAM JUDGE, S.J.

Father Judge had arrived in Alaska in 1890 and

had worked most of that time at Holy Cross in Nulato. He made his first visit to Fortymile in September, 1894, on the steamer Arctic. After laying the foundations of a log cabin he returned to Alaska on the last steamer of the season in October. When he returned in September the following year he discovered his efforts had been dismantled and sold. Undaunted, he rented two adjoining log cabins for one hundred dollars a year. After wintering at Fortymile, Judge returned to Alaska in May, 1896, for a summer visit. He arrived at Circle City where he had decided to establish his headquarters on September 29th. However, he had to return to Fortymile to get his supplies and personal belongings. Icing conditions forced him to remain at Fortymile when he reached there on October 6th. He also found great excitement for the Klondike discovery had been made in August and the miners were leaving so fast that Fortymile was becoming an abandoned camp.

Father Judge stayed at Fortymile that winter visiting several gold-bearing creeks. He then decided to make his headquarters at the new settlement of Dawson City which he reached by dog team at 6 p.m. on March 25th, 1897. Staying with "Big-Alex" McDonald, he visited miners on the creeks and purchased a large piece of property at the foot of the Dawson slide. He returned to Fortymile after break-up to gather his supplies. By June 3rd he was back in Dawson and began construction of a small hospital (St. Mary's) and a chapel. Construc-

tion proceeded rapidly with eight hired workers and occasional volunteers.

When the Rev. Fr. Rene, S.J., the newly appointed Prefect Apostolic of Alaska, paid Fr. Judge a surprise visit on July 15th, 1897, he was alarmed at the cost of construction under way. Upon Fr. Rene's suggestion, a local canvass was made with Protestants and Catholics alike contributing. Forteen hundred dollars was raised immediately. Before leaving, Father Rene promised to send some Sisters of St. Ann before winter. Three Sisters did board the steamer Alice at Holy Cross in September, but only made it to Fort Yukon before they were forced by low water and ice to turn back. This meant that Fr. Judge was left alone, with only the help of whatever local people he could get to assist him, during the hard winter of 1897-98. The sick began to flock to his little hospital. On Christmas Eve, 1897, two hundred people attended midnight Mass.

On the "outside", word of the Klondike finally led the Oblates to mobilize for the Yukon. The first Oblate, Fr. C. Lefebvre, arrived in Dawson on June 11th, 1898, just a week after Fr. Judge's little church with all its contents, had been destroyed by fire. Since Fr. Lefebvre had a portable altar, services were continued. On July 11th, three sisters of St Ann and a lay helper arrived to take charge of the hospital.

Father Judge, later called the "Saint of Dawson City" by many Klondikers, was allowed by his superiors

to stay for a time at Dawson to familiarize the Oblates with his work. While acting as a chaplain to the Sisters of St. Ann and to the patients of St Mary's Hospital, he continued to supervise the construction of a new church and an extension to the hospital. The completed building was blessed on August 21st, 1898. Pierre Berton has much praise for the work of Judge:

Far from the carnival of Front Street, in his makeshift hospital under the hill at the north end of Dawson, Father William Judge, the frail and cadaverous priest, quietly toiled away. All the previous summer, the steaming undrained swamp on which the town was built, rank with undisposed sewage, had spread typhoid, malaria, and dysentery among the unwitting stampedeers. These, together with the scurvy cases, jammed every available cot in the hospital, filling the very hallways and crowding Father Judge himself out of his own spartan bedroom.

The overworked priest had one quality in common with all the others who descended upon the Klondike: he was a believer in miracles. For him, if not always for others, the miracles seemed to come true. It was his practice, for instance, never to turn a patient away, but one afternoon he accepted twenty more than he had bedding for. Then the miracle came: at nightfall three bales of blankets arrived mysteriously on an unidentified sleigh and were dumped at the door. Again, early in the fall, he had so many patients pouring into the hospital that he was forced to put some of them in the upper rooms which were not yet finished, for the roof of his hospital had not been completed. As if in answer to his prayers, the storms relented and there was clear weather for three weeks until the last board was in place. During that winter he found that he could not hire workmen to dig a grave in the frozen ground of the cemetery for one of his dead patients, and so struggled himself with a pick and shovel until he was about to give up in despair. Suddenly, out of the gloom, two husky miners appeared; they told him they had heard that they were wanted at the hospital and proceeded at once to complete the grave and to cover the coffin.

In a sense, Judge was the conscience of Dawson. Men watched him at his work and felt a little better that they belonged to the same race; it was as if his own example cleansed them of their sins. His little office, which contained nothing more than a board lounge, two blue blankets, and a rough wooden drawer in which his worldly possessions were kept, had long since been given over to the sick. The priest, when he slept at all, curled up in the hallways, or on a corner by the stairs, or in any cranny he could find. When his nurses pleaded with him to take more rest, he replied only that when his work was finished he would have plenty of time for sleep. It was his habit to rise at five a.m. to hear Mass, to eat a spare breakfast -- frequently sharing his food with another -- and to work until eleven at night. He always insisted that he be awakened if any patient asked to see him and all through the dark hours he could be seen moving quietly, like a guardian shade, through the wards.

He rarely smiled, and yet his face was forever radiant, beaming with what one man called "an indescribable delight." Despite his frailty, he moved with catlike speed; he did not walk upstairs, but always ran.⁶

The hospital remained in debt despite many generous donations. In an effort to do something tangible for Fr. Judge, the town planned a big Christmas night benefit show at the Tivoli theatre. A new suit of cloths -- to replace his only garment, a worn out cassock -- was forced upon him. He kept this suit for the benefit show only, then was again wearing his old cassock. A few days after Christmas the forty-five year old priest, who looked closer to seventy years, was down with pneumonia. The community knew he would not recover. Skiff Mitchell, an old Protestant friend of the priest, cried when he visited Fr. Judge in the hospital.

"Why are you crying?" Judge asked him. "We have been old friends almost since I came into the country."

"We can't afford to lose old friends like you," Mitchel replied.

"You've got what you came for," the priest reminded him. "I too have been working for a reward. Would you keep me from it?"...

The end came on January 16, and Dawson went into deep mourning. "If the whole town had slipped down into the river, it would not have been more of a shock." someone wrote later. Shops and dance halls closed their doors, and even the houses were draped in black.

...Nothing would do but that the casket cost one thousand dollars and be made of the finest material. It was a gesture in keeping with the general ostentation of the community, though the shriveled figure within would have shuddered at the thought.⁷

THE RETURN OF THE OBLATES

The Oblates had been busy with their work in the Mackenzie basin. Fr. Rene gave a report to both his superiors in Rome and to Archbishop Langevin, O.M.I., the Metropolitan of all the Canadian Northwest, after his visit to Dawson City in July 1897. Papal documents clearly indicated the Yukon was under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of the Athabasca-Mackenzie, so it was up to the Oblates to send the needed missionaries to the Klondike.

Besides Frs. Lefebvre⁸ and Al Desmarais, O.M.I., from his own Vicariate, Bishop E. Grouard obtained two priests, Frs. Gendreau, O.M.I. and Corbeil, a secular, from Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface. Lefebvre followed the northern route via Fort McPherson and Fort Yukon into the Klondike. Fr. Gendreau, appointed Superior of the Oblates of the Yukon and Vicar General of Bishop Grouard, travelled via the south with Fr.

Desmarais and Oblate Coadjutor Brother Dumas, reaching Fort Selkirk on June 24th, 1898. These two remained there to build the second Catholic Church in the Yukon, and to await the arrival of the Yukon Field Force which had chosen Fort Selkirk as its headquarters, and which was making its way overland via Telegraph Creek. Fr. Osias Corbeil was chaplain of the force on their journey. Fr. Gendreu, continuing his journey, reached Dawson on June 25th.

By the time of Fr. Judge's death, there was a hospital and a church in Dawson. Frs. Gendreau and Lefebvre, as well as the Sisters of St. Ann were in town. In November of that year the first Catholic School in the Yukon was opened in Dawson. This school, soon recognized by the territorial Government, was put under the same regime as the Separate Schools of the Northwest Territories.

The new town of Whitehorse was the headquarters of a group of Government Engineers working on a telegraph line and other projects. Since many of the latter group were Roman Catholic, they requested Fr. Gendreau for a church and resident priest. Fr. Lefebvre and coadjutor Brother Dumas arrived on June 27th, 1900, and pitched a tent for quarters and another large tent for a house of worship. In this setting they welcomed their Bishop, Msgr. E. Grouard, in mid August. He, with Coadjutor Br. J.M. Lecreff O.M.I., and some Indian guides, had left Fort McPherson on June 28th, and had reached Dawson City

on July 17th. The bishop made a survey of the Catholic population and its needs. Engineer Charles Tache, a nephew of Bishop Alexander Tache, O.M.I., first Archbishop of St. Boniface, drew up plans for an adequate church building.

Other Oblate missionaries, Fathers Liebert, G. Eichelsbacher, J. Schulte, J.H. Allard, and H. Rivet, soon arrived to serve in the Yukon. Bishop Grouard realized that his territory⁹ was too large and should be divided. Upon reporting to Archbishop Langevin, the latter decided to go and see the Yukon for himself. Arriving at Whitehorse on Sunday, June 9th, 1901, Archbishop Langevin blessed a church bell donated by Mr. and Mrs. McNamara. At Dawson, which he reached on June 14th, he preached the Indulgence of the Century Jubilee, administered the sacrament of Confirmation and blessed a 1150 pound bell for the new church. He reported to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith after his return to St. Boniface in August. The result was a splitting of the diocese with Bishop G. Greynat, O.M.I., being appointed Vicar Apostolic of Mackenzie which was all that territory north of the 60° parallel. Bishop Breynat was consecrated at St. Albert on April 6th, 1902.

Father Gendreau asked to be returned to the diocese of St. Boniface. Bishop Breynat obtained Fr. E. Bunoz, O.M.I., who had worked several years in the diocese of New Westminster, to take Gendreau's place as the Bishop's

Vicar General in the Yukon and as pastor at St. Mary's Church in Dawson. Fr. Bunoz took over on June 11th, 1902.

Bishop Breynat made his first episcopal visit to the Yukon via the White Pass from September, 1902, until just after New Year's Day, 1903. He came to the Yukon again in 1904 to officiate at St. Mary's, Dawson, during Holy Week and on Easter Sunday.

A PREFECTURE, THEN A VICARIATE

As Bishop Bompas of the Anglican Church had found the high northern mountains were too great a barrier for one bishop to serve both the Yukon and Mackenzie basins adequately, so Bishop Brynat found the one northern diocese too impractical. Communications between the two areas were difficult. The only reasonable route from the Mackenzie to the Yukon was via Edmonton, Vancouver, Skagway and Whitehorse. This meant crossing various dioceses and two vicariate or prefecture apostolics to get from one part of the diocese to the other.

After conferring with Bishop Dontenwill of New Westminster and the Metropolitan of St. Boniface, it was suggested that the Yukon, including all the portion of northern British Columbia soon to be crossed by the Grand Trunk Railway (later the C.N.R.) from Jasper to Prince Rupert, be erected into a Prefecture Apostolic. This was done on March 6th, 1908, with all of British Columbia west of the main chain of Rocky Mountains and north of the 54° parallel included in the new Prefecture of the Yukon and Prince Rupert. Fr. Bunoz was appointed

Prefect Apostolic of the new prefecture on April 8th, 1908.

In the fall of 1910, Fr. Bunoz decided to move his headquarters from the fast declining Dawson City to the new city of Prince Rupert, the proposed terminus of the new transcontinental railway. Frs. Plamondon, Lewis, Wolfe and Hartman came in their turn to replace earlier Yukon missionaries. On November 20th, 1916, the Prefecture Apostolic of the Yukon and Prince Rupert was raised to the rank of Vicariate Apostolic and Msgr. Emil Bunoz was appointed Vicar Apostolic and Titular Bishop of Tentyre on June 13th, 1917, and was consecrated at Vancouver on October 18th of that year. He made his first trip as Bishop to Dawson the next spring and continued to visit the Yukon at least every other summer and usually every year.

During the following twenty years everything became very quiet on the Yukon front. By 1935 Frs. P Gagne, O.M.I., and E. LeRay, O.M.I., both at Dawson City, were the only Catholic priests left in the Yukon proper. They made occasional trips to the Mayo-Keno mining district. The Sisters of St. Ann carried on the work at St. Mary's Hospital and School in Dawson. Fr. J.H. Allard looked after the Indians of the Atlin region and made occasional visits to Whitehorse and Teslin, while his younger, Fr. Elphege Allard opened missions in the Telegraph Creek areas between 1925 and 1935. These missions were at Telegraph Creek, Iskut Lake, McDame, and the beginnings of work at Lower Post and Dease Lake. Fr. E.M.S. Horris, O.M.I., in 1878, and Frs. Morice and

Coccola between 1900 and 1925, had made short visits to that area.

Tragedy struck when Father Elphage Allard was drowned in rapids on the Dease River on July 13th, 1935. Bishop Buno, seventy-two years old at the time, had been travelling with Allard and was left stranded alone until he was rescued a few days later by a trapper who just happened to come along. Fr. L. Bosse, O.M.I., who had been working with Allard, carried on alone in the winter of 1935-6.

Father Jean Louis Coudert, O.M.I., who had spent fifteen years in the Mackenzie missions, was elected Coadjutor of Bishop Buno on January 27th, 1936. He was consecrated as Bishop of Rhodiapolis by Cardinal R. Villeneuve in St. Albert on June 7th, 1936.

BISHOP JEAN LOUIS COUDERT, O.M.I.

Bishop Coudert set out to visit his entire new Apostolate immediately after his consecration. At the same time he sent out a call for more missionaries. Travelling by canoe, river boats, steamer and airplane, he covered the whole territory in about three months. When he arrived back at Lejac Indian Residential School, his home for the next few months, eight young Oblate missionaries were available for his territory. Three, who came from the United States, were able to begin work right away. The four from France and the one from Belgium, were distributed to various British Columbia missions to give them a chance to perfect their English

and to adjust themselves to a new country and a new way of life.

Father A. Monnet, O.M.I., reached Mayo, Y.T. on June 29th, 1937, thus becoming the first resident Catholic priest in that mining district. Fr. A. Drean, O.M.I., began to establish a permanent mission at Lower Post, B.C., about the same time. He was joined a few months later by Fr. P. Pouillet, O.M.I., who served as assistant. A resident priest, Fr. Delarue, O.M.I., was appointed in 1938 to serve the Whitehorse Church which had been built in 1899. During its vacant years this church was placed under the jurisdiction of the Parish-priest at Skagway, Alaska, and was visited by the itinerant missionary from Atlin in the summer.¹⁰ Fr. Drean left Lower Post by dog team in the early spring of 1939 to begin a Catholic mission at Teslin, Y.T.

In 1941 Bishop Coudert, who was charged with the care of the northern portion of the Vicariate, decided to move his residence to Whitehorse where he could be close to his work. In 1942 the Selkirk, Y.T. mission, established in 1899, was re-opened by Fr. M. Bobillier, O.M.I. He also looked after all the settlements and camps along the Yukon River from Whitehorse to Dawson City. A small boat, the Little Flower, was his transportation on this long "parish". The year 1942 also marked the construction of the Alaska Highway.

This was the beginning of greatly increased activ-

ity by the Catholic Church in Northern British Columbia and the Yukon. The Sacred Heart Church in Whitehorse served double duty as Parish Church and as Chapel for the American service men. Two new priests were appointed to Whitehorse. Another man was placed at Atlin to be in charge there and at Carcross. For years Atlin had been visited by an itinerant priest from Prince Rupert. Other new Oblate missionaries arrived and were placed temporarily in existing missions pending the opening of new fields. This abundance of missionaries at this strategic time is one of the main reasons the Roman Catholic Church was able to become so well established in the Yukon.

The rapid expansion of the northern work led to a 1944 division of the Vicariate into the Vicariate of Prince Rupert and the Vicariate of Whitehorse. Bishop Coudert became the first Vicar Apostolic of Whitehorse and the little Sacred Heart Church became the Pro-Cathedral. An Oblate Lay Brother arrived to give the Fathers help and to look after the management of material matters. Two new missions at Watson Lake (present airport) and Burwash Landing on Kluane Lake were opened that year. Father Pouillet, who was replaced at Lower Post by Fr. Arsenault, O.M.I., went to Watson Lake while Fr. E. Morisset was given charge of Burwash Landing. Fr. Bobillier, the Yukon River missionary, began work on a mission at Carmacks in 1944. Before the year was out, a second Oblate Lay Brother was assigned to Whitehorse.

In 1945 Fr. O. Desmarais, O.M.I., who had been assisting at Teslin charged with the construction camps on the Cano line, opened a mission at Ross River, Y.T. A school was begun at Whitehorse and completed the following year. Five Sisters of Charity of Providence arrived in November, 1946, to take immediate charge of this school which was not officially inaugurated as a convent-school until February 17th, 1947.

In the district of Fort Nelson, which had been attached to the Vicariate when it was formed in 1944, a mission was built at Prophet River in 1948 with Fr. Y. Levaque in charge. A new rectory, not completed until 1949, was started in Whitehorse. The year 1948 also saw Bishop Coudert leave for Rome for his visit "ad limina". While there he sought more Priests, Brothers and Sisters to serve as missionaries.

Fire struck the St. Mary's Hospital, Dawson City, the best equipped hospital in the Yukon, in 1950. One of the founding Sisters, who had been there since Fr. Judge's days, lost her life in the fire. Years of effort were lost but the Sisters did not lose hope. The old R.C.M.P. barracks were purchased from the Government and turned into a twenty-five bed hospital. The Sisters also purchased the old Governor's mansion and converted it into a home for the aged and a nurses' residence.

At Lower Post a Residential School for Catholic Indian Children was built by the Government. It was

entrusted to the Oblates and to the Sisters of St. Ann who began teaching in the 1951-2 school year. The school was officially opened on April 17th, 1952. Frs. Plaine and Buliard, O.M.I., founded the Old Crow Catholic mission in 1951. In 1952, Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission, Whitehorse, was opened as a mission for the natives of the surrounding district. Fr. Huybers, O.M.I., built St. Henry's Mission, Elsa, Y.T. around this time although it did not receive a resident priest until 1953.

Bishop Coudert returned to Rome in 1953 to attend the General Chapter of the Oblates' Congregation and to recruit more missionaries. In 1954 Maryhouse, a home for transients of all races, colors and creeds, was opened in Whitehorse and entrusted to the care of Staff-Workers of the Madonna House Secular Institute of Combermere, Ontario. The Guadalupe Mission, finished in 1953, became the initial center for this work which developed rapidly because of the great need. There are now (1966) three buildings including one that is new and spacious. This long cherished dream of Bishop Coudert had finally become a reality. The year 1953 also saw Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church built at Calmet, Y.T., by Fr. Turenne, O.M.I. It is served from either Elsa or Mayo.

The main activities in 1955 and 1956 were on the education front although a new church was started at the asbestos mining town of Cassiar, B.C. in 1955. Our Lady of the Yukon Mission was also established around

this time at the Upper Liard Bridge. It received a resident priest in 1956 or 1957. The Lower Post Residential School proved to be too small so the government built a new classroom block. A new Elementary School was built at Whitehorse and officially opened in 1956. In 1957, Fr. Triggs began construction of a new Guadalupe Mission for the natives to replace the one which had become Maryhouse. The new location was a mile and a half north of Whitehorse just outside the reserve rather than in the city itself. By 1959 the Church at Cassiar was completed and blessed. The Bishop had again gone to Rome for his visit "ad limina" and to recruit more missionaries. A new Cathedral Church was built in Whitehorse and blessed in June, 1960.

The Territorial Government gave full recognition to the Catholic Schools in 1960. This meant Separate Schools became Territorial Schools with the same support as other Public Schools. As a result Christ-the-King High School was built in the new Whitehorse subdivision of Riverdale. The Indian Affairs Department's Whitehorse Hostel (R.C.)¹¹ was built near the High School for out-of-town Indian High School students. The hostel was entrusted to the Secular Institute of Madonna House with Fr. E. Cullinane as administrator. A Chapel and a gymnasium were added to the Lower Post school that year and a new church was completed and blessed at Fort Nelson, B.C.

Bishop Coudert celebrated his Silver Jubilee

as Bishop in 1961. A new church at Watson Lake (town-site) was approved that year. A church-residence had been built there previously (ca. 1956) and was served from Lower Post. Now the new church was built and the former building turned into a Priest's residence.

A church-residence was built at Pelly Crossing, Y.T. in 1962 and is now served from Carmacks. Also in 1962 a lot was purchased at mile 296, Ft. Nelson, B.C. for a mission to the Indians of that area. The Carmacks mission was moved (because of constant flooding) with a new church being built by Fr. Languay, O.M.I. The Burwash, Y.T. mission served new settlements along the north end of the Alaska Highway and a church-residence had been constructed at Haines Junction as far back as 1950. Later a Rectory was built and the original building rebuilt as a church. In 1962-63 Fr. Moresset built a church-residence at Beaver Creek (mile 1202) near the Alaska border. The Sisters of Saint Ann, who had carried on the work of St. Mary's Hospital, Dawson City, through depression in the thirties, and the fire of 1950, finally had to surrender the hospital to the Territorial Government in 1963. There was too great a shortage of population, of financial resources and of Sisters to carry on the work.

A new separate school was built in Watson Lake with the Sisters of Mission Service beginning classes in September 1964. That winter Fr. Rigaud moved the Ross

River church to the site of a new village and Fr. J. Doetzel built a log church at Iskut Lake, B.C. The Indian Affairs Department built two teacherages there to accommodate two Sisters of Mission Service who began teaching in September, 1965. Bishop Coudert bought the Keno, Y.T. school, which had been closed to allow children to be bussed to Elsa. This was converted into a church-residence.

Bishop Coudert, the man who had led the development of the modern Vicariate of Whitehorse, resigned as Vicar Apostolic on March 26th, 1965, and was appointed Administrator Apostolic the same day. No successor had been named by November 14th, 1965, the day that Bishop Coudert died while attending Vatican II in Rome. He was buried on November 23rd at Whitehorse. James Philip Mulvihill, O.M.I., a native of the Ottawa Valley, was appointed the new Bishop on December 19th, 1965. He was consecrated Titular Bishop of Capocilla, Vicar Apostolic of Whitehorse, in Whitehorse on January 25th, 1966.

FOOTNOTES on Chapter Three

1 "The (French) Revolutionary leaders were filled with the rationalistic spirit. They viewed the churches as religious clubs. In 1789 church lands were declared national property. In 1790 the monasteries were abolished. The same year the Civil Constitution of the Clergy overthrew the old ecclesiastical divisions, made each "department" a bishopric, and provided for the election of all priests by the legal voters of their communities. The constitution of 1791 pledged religious liberty. Then in 1793 came a royalist and Catholic uprising in La Vendee, and in retaliation the Jacobin leaders sought

to wipe out Christianity. Hundreds of ecclesiastics were beheaded. After the 'terror' was over, in 1795, religious freedom was once more proclaimed, though the state, as such, was to be without religion. It was, in reality, strongly anti-christian. This situation was extended by French conquests to the Netherlands, northern Italy, and Switzerland. In 1798 Rome was made a republic by French arms, and Pope Pius VI (1775-1799) carried a prisoner to France, where he died." (Quoted From W. Walker, A History of the Christian Church, Revised Ed., p. 521.) The Church was restored by the Concordat between Napoleon and the Papacy (Pope Pius VII) in 1801, but it was strongly controlled by the state.

2 Through his parents who lived in the Oblate Parish of St. Pierre, Montreal.

3 V. supra, p. 4

4 V. supra, pp. 25f

5 The Russians, and therefore their church, never reached the British Yukon.

6 Klondike, pp. 392-3

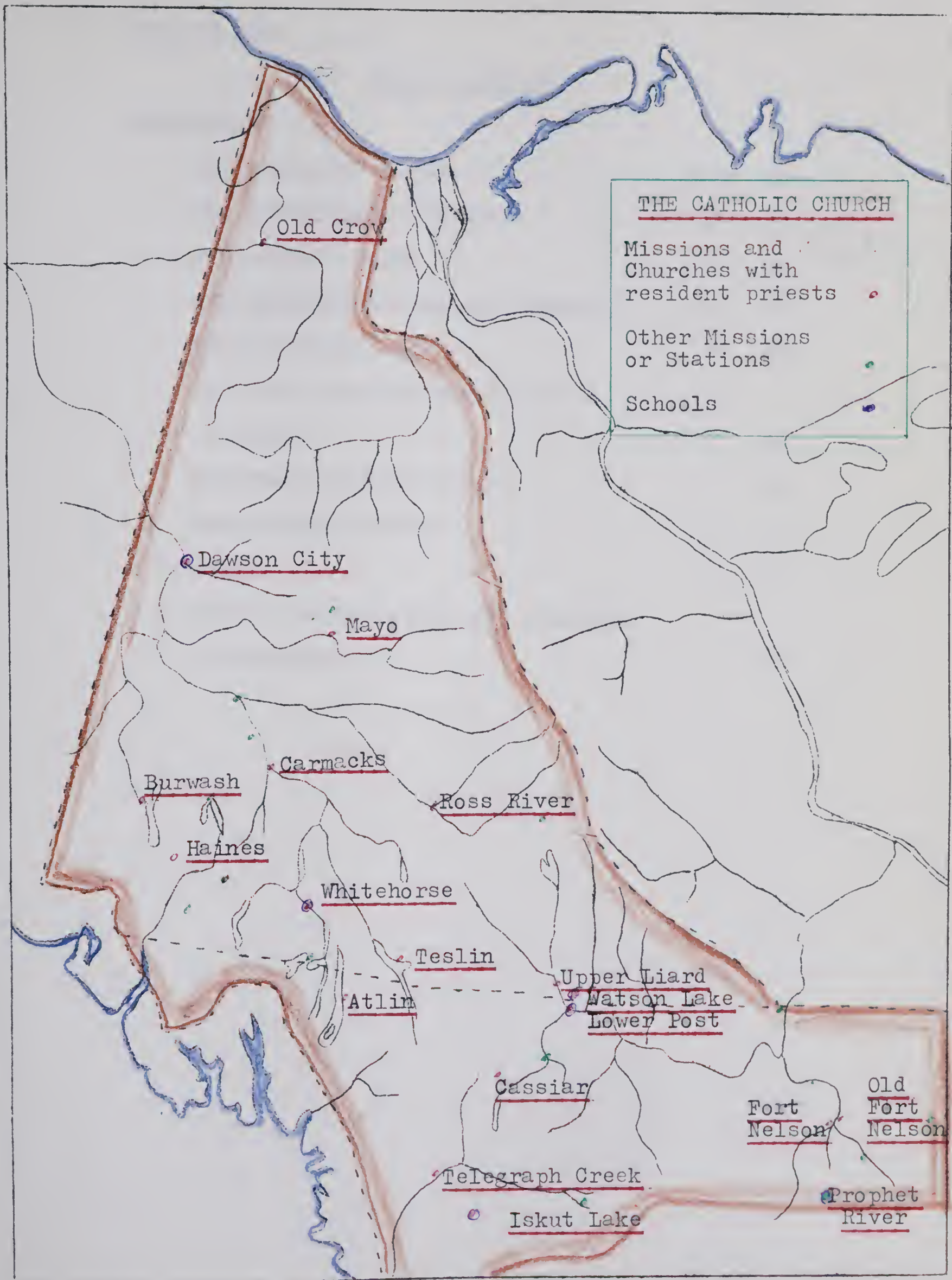
7 Ibid, pp. 397-8

8 V. Supra, p. 68

9 Northern Alberta, Northern Saskatchewan, a portion of Northern Manitoba, and all of the Mackenzie and Yukon areas.

10 V. infra, p. 78

11 V. supra, p. 48



CHAPTER FOUR

OTHER CHURCHES

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THE METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Church entered the Yukon with the Klondike Gold rush. The Rev. John Turner, travelling over the ice on the Stikine River before the opening of navigation, reached Dawson City via Teslin Lake in the spring of 1898. With help from Mr. Hall of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, Mr. Turner obtained a site, pitched a tent and made rough slab seats and a table. Since Mr. Turner was not a young man he could do little more than wait for a younger man to arrive.

A young ordinand, the Rev. Albert E. Hetherington, left Vancouver on June 22nd, 1898 for St. Michael's on a steamboat that carried materials for building a river steamer to travel up the Yukon. The Yukoner was finished and set sail for Dawson City on August 8th, arriving on the 25th. Mr. Hetherington wrote a letter to his niece in Manitoba while on this river trip. Some excerpts show the type of ministry this young man was doing, even while travelling, and gives insights into some of the Church's work along the Yukon River in Alaska.

(A government man) is playing the piano and 'Cousin Billy', the darky valet to the commodore, is singing one of his minstrel selections called 'Chop You in the Head with a Golden Axe' for the amusement of some of the passengers. Back in the ladies' cabin I don't know what is going on for it is always occupied with females (not ladies) who are on board and I seldom go there. Down on the lower deck the deck hands are singing 'Roll the Baby on the Floor Every Sunday Morning', to the accompaniment of an accordin. Such are my immediate surroundings...

We remained at the company dock in St. Michael's until 10 p.m. Sunday (Aug. 7th), and I held two services in the evening. Several

from shore came over...

We passed a Russian Mission today and at 10:30 p.m. we tied up at Holy Cross Mission. Her our "D.G." (Government Man) met the resident priest and, as he was a Roman Catholic, they were friends at once. The Priest took a number of us over to the mission where the Mother Superior and the Sisters treated us with the utmost kindness and gave us all a drink of milk. This was truly a luxury. They grow potatoes, cabbages, peas, turnips, carrots, parsnips and radishes in abundance...I had a long talk with the Sister, which I appreciated wonderfully, for a pure woman in these parts is quite uncommon. They are not only a priceless treasure anywhere, but here a real oddity. They are doing a real good work amongst the Indians, especially the younger ones.

By 8 a.m. next morning we were at Anvik, a very old trading post. An Episcopal minister has been here for thriteen years. The Indians in these parts are much more moral and susceptible to good than one might expect, but they are the most squalid and filthy lot I ever saw. All the way along the river they are suffering from a kind of influenza or grippe. Mr. Chapman, the missionary here, told me, however, that they even refused to buy liquor from the white men who had offered it to them...

(At Yukakoyet, an Indian village on Sunday, Aug. 14th) I was building on good services, but just as we were ready we called in to a wood pile and, of course, the shore was more attractive than church, so considering that prudence was the better part of valor, I did not hold a service that morning. In the evening a nice congregation assembled, but the noise of the engines and the shaking of the boat prevented me from having a good time...

I shall not forget this place (Rampart City) for it was here, for the first time, I got any word of Mr. Turner. While at St. Michael's I inquired diligently of the down-coming passengers if any of them had met the Methodist minister in Dawson, or if there was any preaching of the denomination there, but without the least success. However, just as we were leaving I met a man who said that when he left Dawson some ten days before, the Methodists had not started there.

The only conclusion I could come to was that

Mr. Turner, having taken that sorry Teslin Lake trail, had not succeeded in getting through to Dawson and that in all probability, I was going to have the privilege of getting on the ground first and starting the work.

This evening when we arrived at Rampart City I began searching the faces of miners as they flocked down to the landing. At last I spied one whom I took to be a minister by his cut. So I stepped up and introduced myself and discovered that he was, indeed, one of the same cloth. He was the Rev. Don Hall of San Fransisco, sent out by the M.E. Church to organize our work in Alaska. He came by way of Dawson, had organized our work there and delivered it over to Mr. Turner when he arrived, and then left for his own territory. He was delighted to see me, but no more than I was to see him and hear of Mr. Turner. He had left his wife and family on the 13th of June and had not had a line from them since. He was preparing to winter at Nanook. He said he envied me going to Dawson. My spirits certainly went up to high water mark at this happy meeting.¹

When Mr. Hetherington arrived in Dawson he began supervising the building of a twenty-five by fifty-two foot log church with a pole, moss and muck roof. The completed building was dedicated on October 15th, 1898. Soon a small organ was donated. Miss Alberta Swan must have been another "pure woman" whom Mr. Hetherington had said was uncommon to the north, for she not only volunteered to play the organ; she became the bride of the young minister the following spring, with Mr. Turner conducting the service just before he departed.

The Epworth League of First Methodist Church, Dawson City, was organized on October 9th, 1898, and became quite active. One wonders how many church-goers today could undertake the associate member's pledge², let alone the active member's pledge.³ The nature of the

League's various committees is interesting in the light of the nature of Dawson City. These committees were: Lookout (for getting new members); Prayer Meeting; Evangelistic; Missionary; Temperance and Social Purity; Visitation and Relief; Literary; Social; and Flowers. We can also see that American influence in Canadian affairs is not a new concern. On June 24th, 1899, the League could not reach a decision on "whether it would be advisable for the League to give an entertainment on the evening of the fourth of July."⁴

Mr. Hetherington conducted unique summer outdoor services during his term in Dawson. In 1902 he was transferred to Kamloops and was replaced by Rev. Robert Hughes from Nanaimo, B.C. Mr. Hughes held street meetings after the Sunday evening services, which became so popular that he rented a theatre when the weather turned cold. The management refused rent and donated the light and heat. Mr. Hughes wrote, "The men would smoke, and call for encores, and all enjoyed the old songs and the Old Story."⁵

The Rev. W.H. Barraclough, the next minister, published a weekly sermon in the local paper. On June 21st, at midnight, he would hold a service on top of the "Dome", a hill overlooking Dawson, where the sun was below the horizon for only a half-hour. The text: Rev. 22:5, "There shall be no night there".

The Rev. A.J. Seymour, the Rev. W.E. Dunham, and the Rev. R.W. Hibbert took over each in their turn. By the time Mr. Dunham left in 1916, the decrease in Dawson's

population didn't warrant the Methodist Church carrying on a separate congregation. The congregation thus merged with the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The First Methodist Church building, which stood on ground now occupied by a home for Senior Citizens, was torn down.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The gold rush was also responsible for the beginning of the Presbyterian work in the Yukon. The Rev. W.R. Dickey, who was taken from his second year of Theology at Manitoba College, Winnipeg to go to the Yukon, reached Skagway in the fall of 1897. He built a small building for church and hospital needs, and turned it over to the Episcopalian Church for Interdenominational use. He then proceeded to the Klondike in the early spring of 1898.

The Rev. Andrew "Doctor" Grant and the Rev. A.J. Sinclair arrived in Skagway in time for the shooting of "Soapy" Smith. After Sinclair conducted funerals for Smith and Reid, he went to Bennett Lake where he started a spruce slab church with the slabs from the stampede's whipsawing. Grant headed for the Klondike with Dickey. These men were evidently called upon frequently to bury drowned stampedeers.

Pierre Berton reports that a well-known Alaskan minister, Hall Young, opened a Presbyterian church in a cabin rented from a saloonkeeper in Dawson in 1897.

Rough planks on blocks of wood as pews, a miner's copper blower for a collection plate, and a whiskey bottle for a candleholder were the meager furnishings. Doctor Grant took over this church. When it burned to the ground services were held in the Pioneers' Hall until floods made that building unusable.

Nothing daunted, the minister gathered up his flock and marched them to St. Paul's Anglican Church, walking through the doors just as the congregation commenced to sing the second stanza of a grand old hymn:

'See the mighty host advancing,
Satan leading on .'⁶

Grant, who had some medical training, was locally called "Doctor" Grant. He soon had a log church, St. Andrew's, and a log hospital, the Good Samaritan, built in Dawson. Dickey went out to the creeks to establish a church at "the Forks" of Bonanza and Eldorado Creeks.

The Rev. John Pringle followed the Stikine trail to Glenora in the fall of 1898. The freeze-up had closed navigation so many men, including Pringle, stayed over until spring rather than attempt the unknown mountains during winter. Pringle began holding services in a road house and found a noted Scottish tenor, Jimmy Lumsden, and a professional English singer, named Hunt, to lead the singing.

There is an interesting story of the beginning of Pringle's work in Glenora. The day after his arrival he was setting out to invite people to services. The first snow had fallen and a big stampeder, who had arrived by river boat, had purchased a dog from a nearby ranch, and

a sled and harness from the Hudson's Bay. He harnessed the dog then yelled at it to "Go on". The young dog, confused and trembling, lay down. Its owner, becoming angry, began kicking it just as Pringle appeared on the scene. The minister shouted, "Don't kick that dog again!", to which the stamperder replied, "I'll kick you". Pringle came up to the man saying, "Kick me if you dare but don't kick the dog." The dog-musher looked Pringle over and forgot about kicking anything. Pringle then proceeded to teach him how to train a dog.⁷

After ministering to Glenora, Telegraph Creek and the surrounding area, Pringle crossed over to Atlin in the spring. There he built Atlin's first church. When Pringle left Atlin in September, 1901 for Bonanza Creek, he was succeeded in Atlin by the Rev. J. Russell (until June, 1902); the Rev. E. Turkington (until July, 1905), and the Rev. W.J. Kidd (who stayed for three months). The church in Atlin then remained empty until it was destroyed in Atlin's great fire of May 23rd, 1914. Pringle also built a hospital while serving Atlin. The twenty-four by thirty-six building was completed in the spring of 1900.

"Doctor" Grant was called East for a year and was replaced at Dawson during that time by the Rev. J.J. Wright who had been at Whitehorse. Grant returned in March 1901 and served his dual role in church and hospital for seven years. In 1901 a splendid church, seating six hundred, was erected in Dawson with a large

pipe organ and a manse added later. The annual report for the year ending December 31st, 1902 shows the year's receipts as \$13,988, and the assets as \$43,988, including \$6,725 for the organ.

In 1902 John Pringle's younger brother, George, arrived to work on the creeks. His ten by twelve foot cabin at Gold Bottom Creek, twenty miles from Dawson, served as his headquarters. Soon George was holding services at Gold Bottom, Gold Run, Sulphur, Granville, Upper Dominion and Hunker Creeks. He served for eight years and has left us some memories of the Yukon in his writings. Here are two incidents taken from his Tillicums of the Trail.

George had a Christmas Day wedding at the "Last Chance" roadhouse on Hunker Creek. There was a bar at one end, a kitchen at the other, and a dining room, parlour and gambling room all in one in the middle. A blanket was hung over the bar because of the roadhouse man's "innate sense of the fitness of things". In the background there were many whispers by those who had celebrated too much to be controlled completely by their more sober companions. Right after the wedding the bride, who was the cook, had to get back to work to prepare the Christmas dinner for the roadhouse.⁸

The Yukon had drawn men from many walks of life and resulted in many reunions of old friends and long separated relatives. George recounts one such reunion. He was holding a service at a roadhouse on Eureka Creek

using the counter as the pulpit, clutching a candle in his right hand and reading a book in his left, when a group of people, including a Mountie, came in.

I turned my head for a casual glance at the newcomer, stammered, stuck and couldn't go on. I turned from my congregation, and taking the candle in my hand, stepped nearer. There before me was the man whose face I have so often gazed at, with silent admiration, as I saw it in the photograph in my brother's room. (The brother had left home when George was a small boy.) It was indeed my brother James (the Mountie), the hero of my boyhood days! Our hands clasped as I spoke his name. I turned to the crowd, told them what had happened, and that I couldn't go on with the address. They understood. We sang a hymn and ended the service forthwith.⁹

"Doctor" Grant, who left Dawson City in 1908, was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. A.G. Sinclair for a short time, then by the Rev. Edward Turkington. The latter came from Whitehorse and served until he went East to be married in 1911. Rev. A Ross then served until 1919, Rev. J.Y. McGookin until 1921, and Rev. A.G. Findlay until church union in 1925. Findlay then went to Whitehorse to open -- as a United Church of Canada -- the church that had been closed for nine years. St. Andrew's, Dawson, now also a United Church, was supplied by a Rev. Cribb for two years and Rev. E.E. Fleming until 1930.

The information on the Presbyterian Church in Whitehorse in the early days is somewhat vague. A congregation was started around 1900, possibly by the Rev. J.J. Wright. The Rev. Edward Turkington likely served Whitehorse from 1905 until 1908. Mr. Findlay, who re-opened the church in 1925, served until 1929

when the Rev. W.B. McIntosh, who was ordained in May of that year as a graduate of Union College of B.C., took over. After fourteen months the church was closed because of the financial situation. Mr. McIntosh then went to Dawson City where he served until that church was also closed down for lack of finances in 1932.

St. Andrew's, Dawson City, still stands but is in deplorable repair. Floods and the decay of time are caving in the floor. The beautiful organ still sits abandoned and unusable in its present state.

THE UNITED CHURCH

The United Church was not active again in the Yukon for twenty years. By the early 1950's Whitehorse had become a fairly large town. The Ralph L. Simpson family, along with the help of Padre Ezekiel Martin, an R.C.A.F. Chaplain stationed at Whitehorse, persuaded the United Church officials that it was time to re-open the United Church. A summer student, Mr. William Annis, arrived from Toronto in May, 1954. He held services in the Capitol Theatre, then in the Elks Hall. By September the Whitehorse congregation was officially constituted by Rev. Dr. W.P. Brant, Superintendent of Home Missions for British Columbia. Whitehorse remained without a United Church minister during the winter of 1954-55. The ^{Rev.} Art Chapple was then appointed and arrangements were made to use first the Masonic Hall, then the I.O.D.E. Hall,¹⁰ for services.

Construction of a church building was begun in

July, 1957. By February, 1958, the congregation was able to hold services in their own church basement. This was appreciated because the I.O.D.E. Hall furnace was not functioning very well. The new church was dedicated on October 12th, 1958, by the Rev. N.D. McInnes, Chairman of the Vancouver Presbytery of the United Church.

Rev. A.J.A. Chapple resigned at the end of June, 1959. The Rev. Francis T. Lovelock was then called from Fullerton, Ontario. A new manse in the Riverdale area was completed in December, 1959. This was also the year that the congregation was transferred from the Vancouver Presbytery of B.C. Conference, to Peace River Presbytery of Alberta Conference. Mr. Lovelock stayed only one year. The congregation then called Rev. H.P. Marston of Edmonton who began serving on July 1st, 1960.

The congregation boasts an active Ladies' group (formerly Women's Auxiliary, now United Church Women) organized in 1954. The Men's group was started in 1955, and the Sunday School has been going continuously since 1954. Although the congregation has presented no candidate for the ministry, it has sent Miss Joan Dee to Toronto as a Deaconess candidate in 1957.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (MODERN)

The Presbyterian families resident in Whitehorse in 1950 contacted the Peace River Presbytery asking for services. The Rev. George Dobie of Ft. St. John, and the Rev. R. Davidson of Grande Prairie conducted a survey in early 1951. The Rev. Dr. A. Nattray, Ph.D,

was appointed to Whitehorse in August of that year. The congregation was established and property purchased while services were held in the Capital Theatre. The First Presbyterian Church, constructed from old Army buildings, was dedicated in December, 1952. The following ministers have served the congregation: Dr. A. Rattray (Aug., 1951-Oct., 1953); Rev. R.K. Anderson (Sept., 1953 - April, 1957); Rev. J.B. Milne (July, 1957 - May, 1960); Rev. H.E. Waite (June, 1960 - May, 1963); Rev. T. Gemmell (Aug., 1963 - Aug., 1966); and Rev. Allen Aichen (Sept., 1966 -).

THE SALVATION ARMY

The last major church active in the Gold Rush days was the Salvation Army. The throngs of stampedeers flooding to the goldfields of '98 did not go unnoticed by these Christian Soldiers of William Booth. His daughter, Commander Eva Booth, commissioner for Canada, instructed six men and two women to go to the Yukon. The group left from Toronto and arrived at Skagway by way of Vancouver and the S.S. Tees. This group, headed by Ensign Frank Morris, were inexperienced in mountain climbing. Still they crossed the rugged Chilkoot Pass carrying food, equipment, and two detachable canoes. The following is an incident on the trip down river to Dawson as recorded by Ensign Morris.

One day while going down the Thirty-Mile part of the Yukon River we saw a man clinging for his life to a rock in midstream. As our canoe was travelling about five miles an hour, over treacherous shoals and rocks, it was with

difficulty we reached the bank of the river, as near as we could to the drowning man. We shouted to him to hold fast while the canoe was lowered to within reach. He was urged by our ex-man-o'-war officer to cling to the stern of the boat, which he did, and then was pulled to safety. We then discovered that he was a Presbyterian minister, who had gone to the Yukon for his vacation. His boat had been wrecked and a companion drowned.

While conducting an open-air meeting in the city of Dawson, some time later, we were much interested and amused to learn that, "The Rev. Dr. V. will lecture tonight in this hall on Bobby Burns and how I was saved from a watery grave by the Salvation Army".¹¹

Upon their arrival in Dawson City the Salvation Army group received a cordial welcome. They built their own log headquarters and -- we are told by W.R. Hamilton -- they flourished in Dawson for many years.

THE YUKON BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Convinced that their own brand of the Gospel is the only Gospel, and that their followers are the Yukon's "Christians", the Yukon Baptist Missionary Society workers have gone out with great zeal to convert the Yukon. Here is an extract from the Society's pamphlet, Then and Now.

We believe every person in the Yukon has a never-dying soul, and we know that their hope of Eternal Life in Heaven depends entirely upon a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are debtors to bring the Gospel to them. Our objective is to reach everyone in the Yukon with the Word of God.¹²

The Society also demands the "King James Authorized Version be accepted and used by Society missionaries."¹³ The Society is obviously an evangelical, fundamentalist organization.

The Rev. Harold Lee, working under the Alaska Evangelization Society, arrived in Whitehorse with his family on May 5th, 1946. Services were first held in the Army Chapel, but a small chapel, later replaced by a larger Army building, was dedicated in September of that year. It was known as the Gospel Chapel. A second worker, Leforest Lee, had arrived in July. The early work was done among the White populace, but by October a special prayer day was held for the natives. An Army building was purchased for Indian work and was divided into a classroom and living quarters. Mr. Lee taught nineteen Indian children until Miss Ethel Doan arrived to take over in February, 1947. Shortly after this, the Yukon Baptist group separated from the Alaska Evangelization Society.

In September, 1947, nine large twenty by one-hundred-twenty foot buildings were purchased and "the Lord saw fit to expand the work by leaps and bounds."¹⁴ Soon there were one-hundred-forty school children from as far as three-hundred miles away, four teachers, and twenty-five pre-schoolers. Some children stayed at school year-round while workers were placed in as many as twelve Indian settlements during the summers.

Some of the activities during this period included Sunday Evening radio broadcasts; large Christmas Concerts; the formation of an Indian Baptist Congregation in 1951; and a tour of Alberta by a girls' choir in that same year. The founder of the mission, Harold Lee, was

killed in a car accident on the Alaska Highway on March 1st, 1952.

Government grants for Indian children on a per capita per diem basis helped finance the school. Other help came from individuals and churches throughout Canada and the United States. The buildings were condemned and seventy of the children were transferred to the Anglican school at Carcross in 1955. The Baptist Mission school was dissolved in 1959 when the remaining children were placed either at Carcross or in the new Protestant hostel in Whitehorse. The buildings were then used as a non-Indian residence until a new building, called "Ridgeview Home for Children" was opened at Porter Creek, near Whitehorse. This home has a staff of five and about thirty children. Other buildings were moved to Porter Creek and set up as the Yukon Bible School.

The Gospel Chapel in Whitehorse had to be enlarged so a building fund was started and the Whitehorse Baptist Church was completed and dedicated in April, 1961. By holding meetings in homes, schools, community halls and occasionally in the open air, congregations were formed in various other Yukon communities. Chapels and dwellings were built in some of them. In the mid 1960's there are missionaries at Whitehorse, Watson Lake, Whitehorse Indian Settlement, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Mayo, and Carcross. Other points where the society is active include Upper Liard, Teslin,

Ross River, Champagne, Aisihik, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing, Klukshu, Minto, Pelly Crossing, Elsa, and Keno, as well as Cassiar, and Lower Post in Northern British Columbia.

RIVERDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

A small group of Baptists broke off from the Y.B.M.S. at the beginning of 1964. The first service was conducted by a retired Interim-Pastor from Vancouver, the Rev. Duncan Ritchie, who then served for two years. At the time of writing the Rev. W.P. Morton is acting as Interim-Pastor and is seeking affiliation with the Convention of Baptist Churches in Western Canada. Riverdale Baptist has property, but no building (early 1966). It holds two Sunday services and one on Wednesday. There is a Sunday School enrollment of 60, a Women's Circle, and a young people's group.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

A forced landing led to the formation of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Whitehorse. The Rev. Karl Henry, Secretary of Research, Board of American Missions, was forced down in Whitehorse on October 30th, 1958. He discovered the lack of a Lutheran church in the Yukon so took action leading to the call of Pastor M.K. Gulbis on December 7th, 1959. Pastor Gulbis arrived at the end of February, 1960, and began house to house survey calls. The first meeting was held on March 9th, with four persons present. The first service was held on Easter Sunday, April 17th, 1960.

Services were first held in the I.O.D.E. building then in the Elks building. On October 8th, 1961, thirty persons signed the Charter of the congregation. By November 5th, 1961, when Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church was officially organized, there were fifty-four Charter members. A building program was undertaken in February, 1962. The new church was dedicated on March 14th, 1965. This is the only Lutheran Church in Canada north of the 60° parallel.¹⁴

OTHERS

Besides the churches already mentioned, there is a Nazarene Church and a Pentecostal Tabernacle in Whitehorse, and a Pentecostal Church in Watson Lake. The Jehovah's Witnesses have a Whitehorse Kingdom Hall. The author has written each of these groups but has not been able to obtain any information on their work. Each of them has begun work in recent years and remains quite small. The Baha'i, although non-Christian, might be mentioned as they also have a small group active in Whitehorse.

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION AND MILITARY CHAPLAINCIES

The Alaska Highway was built by the American Army as a defence road and was maintained by them until after the War when it was turned over to the Canadian Army. Shortly after the Highway was opened on November 19th, 1942, the Rev. Donald C. Amos of the United Church, was appointed to the Inter-Church Committee on Wartime Camps and Communities. In this capacity he arrived in

Dawson Creek, B.C., early in January, 1943, and began serving the camps along the road until he reached Whitehorse in early April. After an Easter trip home to report to the Inter-Church Committee, he returned in June, with his wife, to minister to the Highway camps for another year. There was an Anglican man also visiting the camps from the Alaska border to Watson Lake. In July a Baptist minister began serving from Dawson Creek to Fort Nelson. Mr. Amos then took the Fort Nelson to Watson Lake stretch. He later surveyed the Mackenzie basin camps to Canol and Fort Norman and half way along the Canol pipeline. The Baptist, Rev. Charles Smith, then served there for about three months in the summer and fall of 1943. In January, 1944, a Presbyterian minister arrived to serve the Canol project for six months. These ministers served the civilian construction workers and co-operated with the U.S. Army, U.S. Airforce, and R.C.A.F. chaplains in many areas. In commenting on this work Mr. Amos writes:

I have maintained that though we left few tracks or land marks in that vast territory as we plied our mission, we were in truth staking a claim for the Church of Jesus Christ as we went... It must always be remembered that the Church was among the road-builders working to prepare the way for the hundreds and the thousands who shall yet come into the northwest.¹⁵

The Rev. C.A. McLaren (U.C.) appears to have been one of the first R.C.A.F. chaplains to visit the northwest staging routes (including Dawson Creek, Ft. St. John, Beaton River and Fort Nelson). On August

31st, 1944, Chaplain H. Ott (U.S. Army) was at Watson Lake, and Chaplain W. Lundberg (U.S. Army) was at Whitehorse. Other American chaplains were serving points further south along the Highway. Part time chaplains (P) were appointed at various points along the Highway on September 4th, 1944. The only Yukon appointment at this time was the Rev. L.G. Chappell (Ang.) of Whitehorse. An R.C.A.F. report, dated June 14th, 1945, shows the Rev. R.C.W. Ward was the "Church of England Highway Chaplain (P)." In March, 1946, Mr. Ward was appointed "Officiating Clergyman" to minister to R.C.A.F. personnel at Watson Lake, Teslin, Snag, Aishihik and Smith River.

Chap~~l~~ains Roblin (Bapt.), H.E.D. Ashford (U.C.) and J.A. For~~b~~es (den. ?), served in succession from August, 1944 to the end of the War as Command Chaplain of North Western Air Command. They made periodic visits to the stations. Fairly regular services were held at the various Alaska Highway Staging Route Units and communications Repeater Stations from 1946 to 1948 with a chaplain appointed for this work. In 1948 the R.C.A.F. chaplain (P) was stationed at Fort Nelson to work in conjunction with the Canadian Army chaplain appointed at Whitehorse. In 1951 the R.C.A.F. chaplain was transferred to Whitehorse where one is still (1966) stationed.

Lt. Col. R.O. Wilkes, M.C., C.D., (Canadian Army), was the Command Chaplain (P) of Western Command until 1958. He made exploratory trips and held services along

the Highway before chaplains were stationed there. Regular chaplains (Army) were stationed at Whitehorse from November 15th, 1948, until August 9th, 1964, just after the Army turned the Alaska Highway maintenance over to the Federal Department of Public Works. These chaplains -- in succession -- were: G.S. Fraser (U.C.); G.E. Darrach (U.C.); W.E. Hobbs (Ang.); P. Sawatzky (U.C.); A.J. Alfred (U.C.); A.F. Otke (Luth.), and: H.R. Coleman (Ang.).

The Roman Catholic Chaplaincy relied on the Mission of Whitehorse, Y.T., and the Oblate missionaries along the Highway to serve their people in the Armed services.¹⁶ There were, however, three full-time chaplains stationed in Whitehorse. They were: Capt. R.W. Mann (Jan., 1951 - March, 1952); Maj. Rev. G. LeBell (June, 1960 - March, 1962); and Capt. Rev. T. Nagengast (June, 1962 - May, 1964). They served the Army and R.C.A.F. personnel of Whitehorse and made three trips a year to the Highway Maintenance Camps.¹⁷

FOOTNOTES on Chapter Four

1 W.R. Hamilton, The Yukon Story, pp. 156-62

2 "As an associate member, I am willing to serve in committees, and to work as I may be required to advance the interest of the league, and will by conversation, conduct and companions endeavor to sustain its character as a Christian society." (Quoted from the Minutes of First Methodist Church, Dawson City, Epworth League Minutes.

3 "Taking Christ as my example and trusting in the help of the Holy Spirit I promise that I will endeavor to learn and do my Heavenly Father's will, that I may make

stated seasons for private prayer and the daily study of the Bible, the Rule of my life. As an active member of the League I will, except when excusable to my master, be present at and take active part aside from singing in, every League Prayer Meeting and will be true to my duties as a member of the Church. I will abstain from all amusements upon which I cannot Ask God's blessing. I will honor God with my substance as he has prospered me. I will by kindly words and deeds endeavor to cultivate the Spirit of Christian friendship and to bring my associates to Christ." (Quoted from minutes of Epworth League, Dawson City.)

4 Minutes of the Epworth League, First Methodist, Dawson City

5 D.E. McAllister, "The Early Methodist Church in the Yukon (MSS)"

6 P. Berton, Klondike, p. 297

7 W.R. Hamilton, Op. Cit., p 164

8 p. 69

9 p. 117

10 The author was unable to ascertain when the Mason, I.O.D.E., Elks, and other such lodges or organizations began in Whitehorse, but the consensus of those people asked by author was that they likely began around the turn of the century when Whitehorse itself began.

11 Hamilton, Op. Cit. pp. 167-8

12 p. 6

13 Article one of the Principles and Practices recently added to the Doctrinal Statement.

14 This information of the Lutheran Church comes from the printed dedication service on the occasion of the dedication of the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Whitehorse.

15 Quoted from a personal letter to the author dated Nov. 19th, 1965

16 V. supra, pp. 77ff

17 This information on Chaplaincies was provided by the Chaplains General of the Armed Forces -- V. Bibliography and Acknowledgments for individual contributors.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

SUBHEADINGS

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter will be an attempt to quickly review the work of the Christian Church in the Yukon, to relate the different branches to each other, and to comment on why events may have happened as they did. First, however, the original religion of the Indians will be examined to see what preceded the Christian missionaries. The chapter will end with some comments on the nature of the Church in the Yukon today.

NATIVE RELIGION

A true assessment of the religious beliefs of the native people prior to their contact with the white man is not easy. The early missionaries were more interested in bringing the Gospel than in learning about pagan beliefs and practices. A good example is the Rev. Kirkby's brief reference to the Loucheux renouncing their "curious arts".¹ Still, he specifies their renouncing of murder, infanticide and polygamy. The fur traders were interested in trade, so paid little attention to the Indian's religion.

Although little material is available on the beliefs of the Yukon Indians specifically, we know something about the broad group of Northwest Territories Indians -- including the Loucheux.² They had no idea of a supreme being above other beings. Instead they had a type of totemism in which each waterfall, each lake, each curiously shaped stone, or tree, or other object had its own spirit. Many Indians believed in a personal guardian spirit --

usually an animal or some object seen in a vision -- which would help them in times of difficulty. Dying men often confessed their sins in the hope of delaying death. Women in mourning would cut off their hair. The Loucheux would cut hair from a dead man and place it on a stick by a river, the only route of travel, to show the man had died. The dead were usually cremated.

The Chilkoot Indians were of an entirely different general group. This coastal group, along with the eastern Iroquois, were the most advanced group in what is now Canada. We have already seen that they kept slaves and that they kept the interior Stick Indians well subjugated.³ The Coastal Indians did believe in various types of spiritual beings with the legendary Thunderbird being one of the greatest. However, there was little agreement, even within one tribe or town, on these spiritual beings. The main function of religion was to avoid taboos. Some medicine men taught that a man may have two or three souls. Sickness was an indication that one or more souls were missing and had to be found and brought back to the ailing man. The Chilkoots usually cremated their dead, keeping the ashes in boxes traded from the Russians. The medicine men were buried in grave houses and slaves were thrown into the sea. Carved monuments or totem poles were sometimes erected as memorials.

THE EARLY EVANGELIZATION

The Anglican missionaries were the first to do

effective missionary work among the Loucheux Indians of the Yukon. We have seen that there was no rush to baptize for the sake of claiming converts. Instead there is great evidence that care was taken to give the native people a sound understanding of the Christian faith. This is reflected in the number of native catechists who were able to teach other natives, in the trouble the Roman Catholic Church had trying to establish Yukon missions in Anglican areas, and in the fact that many missionaries stayed with the natives giving their whole lives to the Indian work. The modern village of Old Crow is thought of as a living memorial to Archdeacon McDonald and represents a continuous ministry of over a hundred years to those Loucheux people. It was also noted, in chapter two, that a number of Anglican natives have been ordained to serve their own people.

For over thirty years the Anglican Church was the only church with Yukon missionaries among the Indians and the pre-Klonkike miners at Fortymile and other communities. Much of the credit for this early and continuous work must go to men who remained in the north until their eventual retirement. We noted evidence that the most effective work was being done among the native people who "longed for instruction"⁴ while the miners were too busy, on the whole, to take an interest in the Church. We could begin to see the bad effect the white man was having on the native Indians when Bompas was faced with the schooling and care of the halfbreed or

Metis children left behind the miners and prospectors. This led directly to the first Yukon Church School at Fortymile with Miss Mellet becoming the first Yukon woman churchworker when she volunteered her teaching services in 1893.

The next year, 1894, marked the beginnings of the Roman Catholic Church's Yukon work as Father Judge made his first visit to Fortymile. We have seen how he was ready to concentrate his work at Circle City, Alaska when Dawson City sprang up. It is interesting to note that Rev. J. Bowen, who was to build St. Paul's Anglican Church in Dawson City, happened to be serving Bishop Rowe of Alaska at Circle City when the news of the Klondike reached him. This meant the first two missionaries in Dawson both came from Circle City with Fr. Judge arriving on March 25th, and Rev. J. Bowen in June, 1897. The Anglican and Catholic churches were thus able to be in Dawson City a year before any of the Protestant Churches (assuming Anglicans are not "Protestants" in the strict sense of the word)..

The trip by Bishop Clut, O.M.I., and Fr. Lecorre, O.M.I., from Ft. McPherson, N.W.T., to St. Michael's, Alaska, in 1872 and 1873, should be noted because Fr. Lecorre established the missionary work among the natives of the Lower Yukon. There is a little friendly rivalry today when the Oblate Fathers tell the Jesuit Fathers of Alaska that the strongest modern Jesuit Alaskan missions are those initiated by the Oblates.

DURING THE GOLD RUSH

We have seen how Fr. Judge began work on both a church and a hospital, while the Anglicans built a church in Dawson. During the winter of 1897-98, Fr. Judge had only the help of local people for his little hospital. The Anglican Church remained concerned about its Indians giving only Rev. J. Bowen over to the work at Dawson. The next Spring, 1898, the Catholic Church was able to gather three Sisters of St. Ann, and four priests to begin the Yukon work under the Oblates. This ready manpower within the Catholic Church would show up in the Yukon forty-five years later.

The spring of 1898 brought not only the new Catholic workers, but also the Protestant ministers. It is hard to say at this time whether Rev. J. Turner, the Methodist, or Rev. Hall Young, the American Presbyterian, reached Dawson first. Both of their churches were active in ministering to the Klondikers for many years. We have seen that neither Turner nor Young stayed for long. They were soon replaced by other men who did stay. Doctor Grant, the founder of the Good Samaritan Hospital in Dawson, was to spend some years serving both St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and the Hospital. We have already noted that the Presbyterian Church was the only Protestant Church which did much work outside of Dawson itself. There were Presbyterian ministers and churches at Atlin, in B.C., at Whitehorse and at the Gold Creeks in the Yukon, as well as the Presbyterian hospitals in

Dawson and Atlin. The Savation Army was also in Dawson with its small group.

When one recalls that the population of Dawson City reached a peak of around thirty-five thousand people, the largest city west of Chicago at that time, five churches -- including the Salvation Army -- might appear very inadequate. But when one realizes the nature of Dawson City, its transiency, and the lure of the gold fields, five churches might not be such a poor representation after all. Also we should remember that at least three of these churches -- St Paul's Anglican, St. Andrew's Presbyterian, and St. Mary's Catholic -- were large churches with large buildings that later proved very difficult to keep up and heat when the population and support began to dwindle.

In addition to spiritual needs, the Presbyterians were concerned about hospital services, the Anglicans about their Indian's education and welfare, and the Catholics about hospitals and schools in Dawson.

THE DOWNHILL SLIDE

The year 1900 saw the development of church work for the Anglican, Catholic and likely the Presbyterian churches in Whitehorse. This was to be the last large new settlement resulting from the gold rush. From then on the people began to ebb out of the Yukon. The first church to withdraw from Dawson was likely the Salvation Army although the date of its withdrawal is not known. The Presbyterian Church withdrew its minister from the

gold creeks while its Atlin Church began to have periods of vacancy, as did Whitehorse. Finances got tight for the First Methodist Church in Dawson and church union was in the air. The result was the Methodist faithful joining the Presbyterians at St. Andrew's in 1916. At some point in the next few years the Roman Catholic Church could no longer justify keeping a priest at Whitehorse. In 1930 the Whitehorse Presbyterian (by then a United) Church closed its doors for the last time. Two years later St. Andrew's United in Dawson closed for lack of people and finances. At this point there were only Anglican priests throughout the Yukon besides the two Catholic priests and the Sisters of St. Ann at St. Mary's Church, Hospital and School in Dawson.

The reason for this general decline is simple. The Yukon had lost most of its population. The Anglican Church, which had maintained its Indian missions throughout all these activities, was the only Church to still have people to minister to outside of Dawson. To understand the rapid expansion of the Roman Catholic Church during and immediately after the Second World War, we must understand something of the Anglican Church's situation in the 1930's.

The great depression hit all churches hard, but it must have hit the Anglican Church in western Canada doubly hard because a financial scandal in the Metropolitan finances of Rupert's Land wiped out many endowments that carried on the normal work of the Church.⁵

The Yukon, which depended almost entirely on outside financial support, had trouble maintaining its missions among the Indians. Although the northern Loucheux around Old Crow have always been a pride of the Anglican Church, most Indians had learned the bad habits and morals of the white man. The Anglican Church struggled with these problems as well as it was able, but it just did not have the needed resources in men and money.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Bishop Coudert, in contrast to the Anglicans, was able to obtain men almost as soon as he was assigned the apostolic care of the area. At first these Catholic men were placed in locations where there were no Anglican missionaries -- Mayo and Lower Post -- and in the vacant Whitehorse Catholic Church. There was a real need for spiritual guidance among both the Indians and Whites throughout the Yukon. The Catholic liturgy was not so different from the Anglican liturgy that the native people could not adapt themselves from one to the other. When the great expansion of the Yukon came with the wartime construction of the Alaska Highway and the Canol Pipeline, the Catholic Church had plenty of trained and experienced men already in the Yukon. It is not hard to see why the Catholic work expanded rapidly, soon overtaking the Anglican Church which still was suffering from a shortage of men and resources. It appears to be a case of the Catholic Church having resources to reach the uncommitted natives rather than a case of the

Anglicans losing their faithful. The Anglicans did, however, lose many nominal members who had been baptized Anglican then left unministered.

The main Protestant activity during the War appears to have been through the Armed Services Chaplaincies and through the Inter-Church Committee on Wartime Camps and Communities which ministered to the civilians in the various construction camps.

After the War the fundamentalist Baptists began a very enthusiastic evangelization campaign with the Rev. Harold Lee's arrival on May 5th, 1946. The expansion of the Yukon Baptist Mission appears to have been very rapid in the early years of its existence. This might be explained by two factors. First, this Church, which was convinced it was charged with the salvation of the Yukon, was very vigorous in its efforts. Secondly, the Baptists were the only Protestant Church and likely received support they would not have had if other Protestant churches were present. The pamphlet, Then and Now,⁶ indicates the present work in Whitehorse might be dropping off now that there are other Protestant churches in Whitehorse.

These other Protestant churches have still not become active in the Yukon outside of Whitehorse. There, as we have seen, the United, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Nazarene, Pentecostal, and break-away Baptist churches have all established congregations. Watson Lake has a small Pentecostal Tabernacle with a part time pastor.

Watson Lake also has monthly United Church services in St. John the Baptist Anglican Church conducted alternately by the Whitehorse and Fort Nelson ministers. Other points in the Yukon receive occasional Protestant services from the Whitehorse clergy. Whitehorse has a ministerial association that held a week of ecumenical services early in 1966. All churches -- including the Roman Catholic Church under their new Bishop, Mulvihill -- took part with one of the services being held in Sacred Heart Cathedral (R.C.) with the United Church minister preaching.

All of the churches throughout the modern Yukon are faced with a common problem in their white congregations. The population is very transient. The congregations sometimes have an annual turnover of greater than fifty percent. This may be one of the reasons why the Protestant churches, which depend so much on congregational participation rather than on presenting the liturgy and administering the sacraments, are not very strong in the Yukon. We have seen that even in the case of the Lutheran Church the congregation was started by a man who was placed in Whitehorse by an outside organization to begin a new congregation. This manpower support from outside is why the Catholic Church has been expanding in the North. The Anglican Church has generally been able to maintain its strength where it has been able to maintain a priest.

The Indian work is difficult to assess. Many, if

not most, of the Yukon Indians live on a very low socio-economic level. The writer has been unable to document any data on the modern Indian situation, but there is general agreement among Yukoners that the situation is bad. There was a recent Indian Affairs Department furor over attempts to improve sanitation and basic housing among the native people. Yukoners are not greatly shocked to find an Indian searching a garbage barrel -- presumably for food. The writer has visited the Watson Lake nursing station to find the only patients are Indian children suffering from malnutrition and neglect. There are, of course, notable exceptions, but the Indians, generally, have tended to pick up the bad habits of the whites but have not been able to adopt the white man's way of living. One of the reasons why Old Crow may be the most successful of the Yukon missions is the fact that it is the most isolated mission in the Yukon. The Indians there have not seen the examples of the whites. The Anglican Church, and the Catholic Church -- in the past two decades -- have put great efforts into the education and welfare of the Indians. Unfortunately many of the young people appear to forget all they learned and practiced at residential school as soon as they return to their homes. We should mention that the Baptists are still working with the Indians, but have lost ground since their school buildings were condemned and the children transferred to the Anglican Chooutla School at

Carcross.

In the early days of the Yukon the Anglican Church had men like McDonald, Bompas, Canam and Totty who spent their lives ministering to the Indians and the few whites of the Yukon. That was the time when the Anglican Church became strongly established in the area. Today there are fewer long term Anglican missionaries. Instead we find Bishop Coudert in the Catholic Church serving his entire episcopacy in the Yukon. Of the eight Oblate Fathers who came to the area when Bishop Coudert first called for missionaries in 1936, we find Frs. Monnet, Drean, Pouillet, and Bobillier still active along with many others who came north a quarter of a century ago. If long term dedication is a factor in the effectiveness of the Church in the Yukon, we can understand how the early Anglicans and the modern Catholics have established strong, permanent missions.

A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

The future of the Yukon Church is closely related to the future of the Yukon itself. If the natural mineral resources are greatly developed, thus expanding the economy and population, more Protestant churches will likely appear outside of Whitehorse. If, however, there is no great economic change in the Yukon, it is quite likely the Anglican, Catholic, and -- to a much lesser extent -- the Baptist churches will continue to be the only churches ministering throughout the two hundred thousand square miles of Yukon that lie outside of Whitehorse

in that famous land of the gold rush and the midnight sun.

FOOTNOTES on Chapter Five

1 V. supra, p. 24

2 Most of this information on Native Religions is taken from Douglas Leechman's, Native Tribes of Canada, pp. 224-5; 318-323. Mr. Fry, the Indian Affairs Superintendent, Whitehorse, referred the author to Prof. Catharine McClellan of the University of Wisconsin, but she was unable to help with the Indian's religion although she provided much information on other cultural aspects of the Yukon Indians before contact with white man.

3 V. supra, p. 2

4 V. supra, p. 29

5 V. footnote #23 on Chapter Two

6 Published by the Y.B.M.S.

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